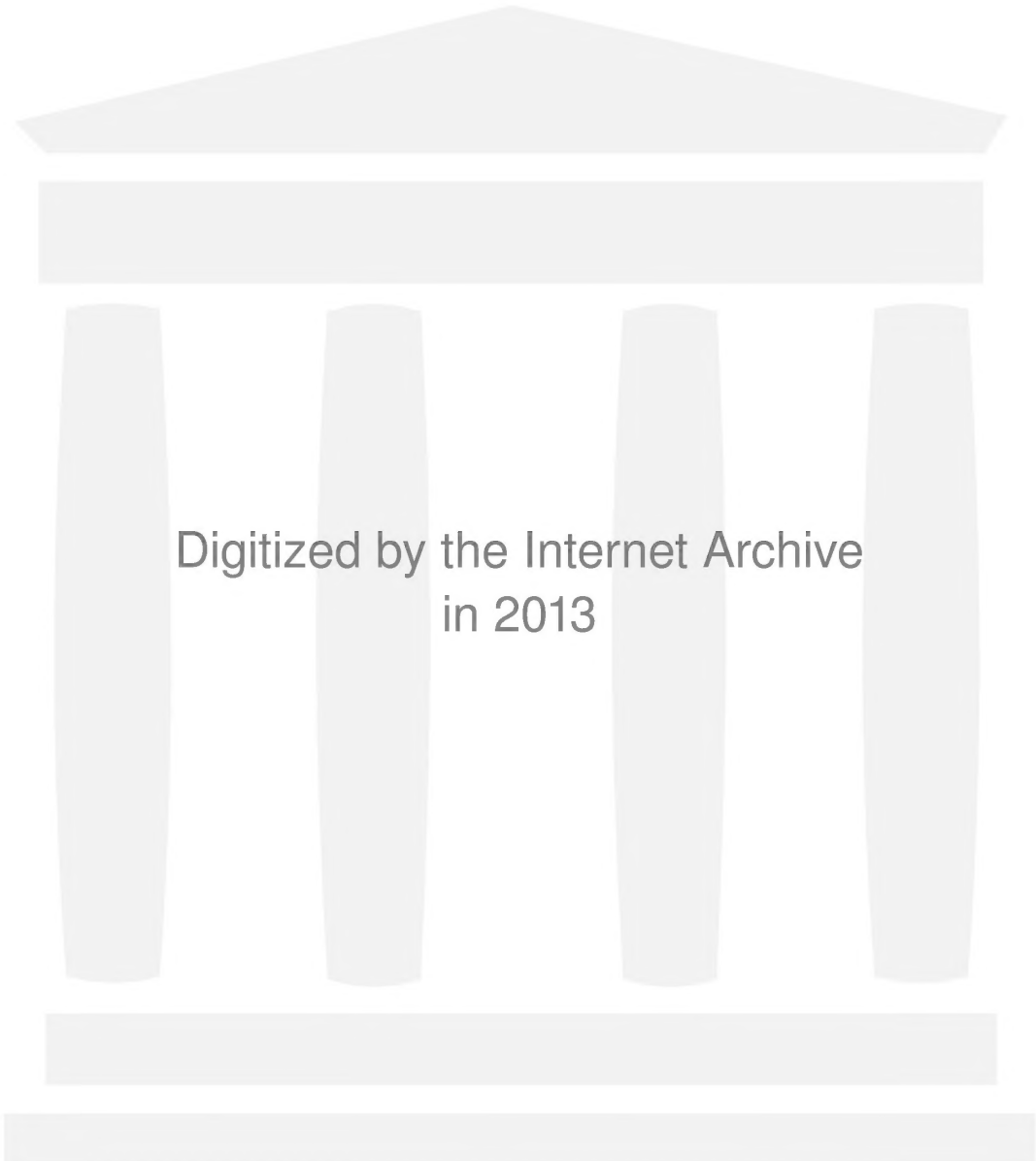


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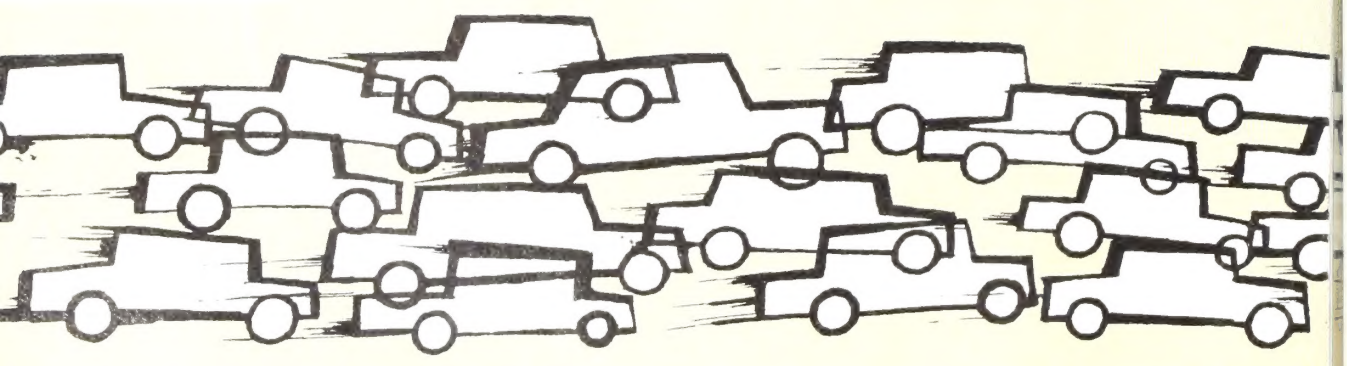
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LETTERS

Heart of Darkness

I find it difficult to understand whom or what Denis Johnson is blaming for his perceived suffering in Liberia and the Ivory Coast as he searches for Charles Taylor ["The Small Boys' Unit," October 2000]. The volume of pent-up anger and xenophobia he expresses toward the black people whose countries he is visiting compares only with the ingratitude he shows to those who help him. At every juncture he takes pains to assure us that he was not forced to be in West Africa, that he is there simply to get his story. Yet when Johnson is handed not only the story he came for but the larger story of humanity caught in a very difficult situation, he botches it.

That Johnson managed to turn this into a parody of his own self-pity and personal cowardice is bad enough, but that he asks me—a *Harper's* reader who happens to be West African—to act as his father confessor is beyond the pale. If this sniveling account is what he intends to pass off as "coverage," then Johnson would have served us and himself much better by remaining in Iowa City doing what he does best: fiction.

Benjamin Ofoma
Los Angeles

I commend Denis Johnson for his straightforward account of his foray into Liberia. One statement in p[ar]ticular—"Three days in this zo[o] and I could only just manage to h[old] myself back from screaming, Ni[g]gers! niggers! niggers!"—is bound [to] be controversial. Your more poli[ti]cally correct readership may fi[nd] such a statement offensive. Joh[n]son's bare introspection, howev[er] does not reinforce racist behavior [or] attitude but highlights it as it exist[s].

To gloss over such thoughts or i[m]pose a sweeping prohibition of rac[ist] propensities would be a superfic[ial] nostrum. Johnson deserves applau[se] and not castigation; I fear he may r[e]ceive too much of the latter.

Eric J. Iannelli
Seattle

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Plugging Deregulation

I certainly hope Alan Weism[an] didn't use a computer to write his r[e]port on electricity deregulation ["Po[w]er Trip," October 2000] or file his st[o]ry electronically. If he did, he used t[he] same power that he so disdains.

The "humming, popping" pow[er] lines that offend him are the engin[es] that drive the new digital econom[y]. Electric utilities didn't invent t[he] new technologies that need pow[er] for computers, servers, routers, c[ell] phones; those of us in the indust[ry] work to provide the electricity nee[ded] to make life better for everyon[e]. That goes for the people of northe[rn] Mexico, who will benefit from t[he] electric power lines that Weism[an] dislikes. Without more electricit[y] the economy of northern Mexi[co] will not be able to grow and prospe[r].

Electricity deregulation is not t[he] bugaboo he claims it to be; do

operly, it should assure customers oice and, in some areas, lower ices. The pricing problems in San) ego this summer show that the regulated power market is still ad- sting to the law of supply and de- and. And the understandable up- ar over customer bills there minds us that Americans take heap, reliable electricity for granted.

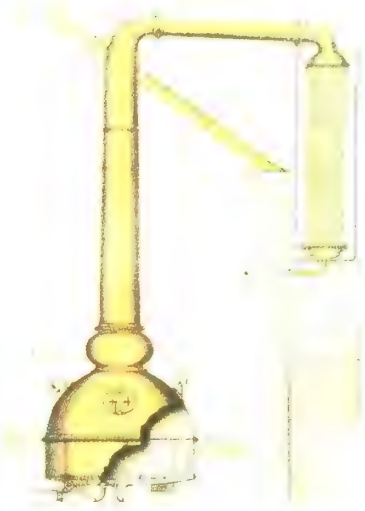
As a country, we need to make de- sions that benefit all of society— cluding decisions about the fuel ix in our power plants and the use distributed generation (such as fu- cells). Utilities are not "terrified" those new alternatives. In fact, any companies will be interested selling the fuel cells, the solar chnology, and the fuel that cus- mers of the future will use.

ll Bruce
dison Electric Institute
/as ington, D.C.

Toward the conclusion of Alan Veisman's thoughtful and engaging rticle, an all too predictable strain f American optimism takes over. In he 1970s, people with environmen- al concerns like Weisman's aggres- vely supported the construction of uclear plants—like fuel cells, a sup- osedly clean and efficient source of nergy. More recently, there was the romise of cold fusion, briefly firing veryone's imagination before it rned out to be yet another utopian elusion. Such delusions are sympto- natic of our indomitable belief that cience and technology will allow us o have our cake and eat it too.

Currently, fuel cells are impres- vely hyped as reliable and safe. hey are, however, prohibitively ex- ensive, and we don't know how safe r reliable they'll be when the car nanufacturers and power companies eap unbelievable profits selling the rateful millions fuel-cell-powered ars and home-heating systems. We nay even discover that reliance on uel cells carries its own drastic enalties—a possibility Weisman, ho early in his article criticizes the fficacy of business-based "panaceas," eaves unmentioned.

Gordon Theisen
Carrboro, N.C.



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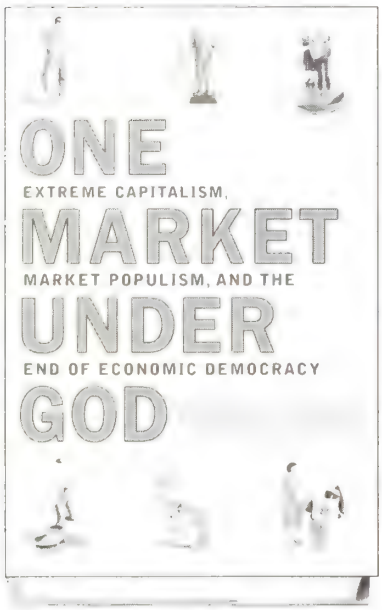


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—Thomas Geoghegan, author of *Whose Side Are You On?*

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I happen to know an executive in the power industry who loves beautiful wilderness as much as anyone but also considers mines and power lines to be "dramatic," not eyesores. I think it's worth pointing out that the author of "Power Trip" expresses a similar industrial bias, by wishing to keep the Arizona wilderness a place where "cattle can range free." The ugliness of once vibrant grassland turned to bare sand, scabbed over with mesquite and snakeweed, may be more subtle than giant metal towers, but it's arguably much more profound. Free-range cattle drastically degrade millions of acres of public land while providing about 3 percent of total beef production.

John Kuchmo
Las Cruces, N.Mex.

Flying Too High

The *Harper's* Index for October suggests that on average the Concorde flies 4.7 miles closer to the sun than other passenger planes. However, that would surely be true only at midday. At midnight, local time, the Concorde would be on the far side of the planet from the sun and would therefore be flying 4.7 miles farther away from the sun. At 6 A.M. and 6 P.M. it would be the same distance from the sun as other planes, and for all the hours in between, I am sure someone could calculate how much closer to or farther away from the sun it would be. But only when the Concorde is at a spot on the earth where it is noon would your Index line be correct.

Trevor Hancock
Kleinburg, Ont.

The Executioner's Song

Robert Murray observes correctly that our society seems to have lost its stomach for capital punishment, preferring to conceal the reality behind a metaphor of eternal sleep ["It's Not Like Falling Asleep," Readings, November 2000]. The transformation of capital punishment from a public event into today's quiet lullaby impoverishes us. But those who truly respect life are not troubled by the constant terror Murray feels waiting on death r[ow] or by the pain he will feel when l[ast] sentence is carried out. Nor are th[ey] delighted. Murray, the person, [is] now most assuredly beside t[he] point.

A murderer, by his terrible act, [in]vokes the rights of another and [si]multaneously relinquishes his ow[n] rights. A just society should not ca[re] about the murderer's feelings. It [is] compelled to use the murderer's l[ife] to correct the error exposed by [his] sin—considering only the collect[ive] society and completely disregardi[ng] the murderer himself.

Dino Chiesa
Pittsburgh

Robert Murray aptly describes t[he] intense ironies involved in a stat[e] attempt to prescribe the dea[th] penalty humanely. I have been a v[o]cal opponent of the death pena[lty] for years, but, I must confess, M[ur]ray's anxieties about the mechanic[s] of his impending doom pleased so[me] dark, vengeful part of me I did n[ot] know existed.

I knew the couple Murray and [his] brother killed. From 1988 to 199[1] I frequented the store owned by De[an] Morrison and Jackie Appelhans [in] Grasshopper Junction, Arizona. T[he] town boasted a population of six[—] though Jackie and Dean alwa[ys] pointed out that they should ha[ve] changed it to two after the childr[en] moved away.

Yes, Mr. Murray, it is terrible th[at] you have placed yourself in a syst[em] that intends to eliminate you. Yes, [it] is ironic to offer you the choice [of] your own end. And, yes, we must [ac]cept a certain ambiguity of moral [re]when dealing with the execution [of] criminals such as yourself.

Enjoy the anxiety, Mr. Murray. Enjoy the beat of the heart and t[he] sweat of the palms and the lucid m[o]ments envisioning the end of yo[ur] existence. Enjoy them as you a[re] your brother did not allow Dean a[nd] Jackie to. Although I still have m[isg]ivings about a bureaucracy decidi[ng] whether citizens live or die, to yo[u], Mr. Murray, I say good riddance.

Christopher R. Dudley
Honolulu

Robert Murray's lip-biting over his needle or gas choice strikes me this petty. For the last decade, I have been in a cell in a high-security facility, agonizing every day, every long sleepless night, over the grief and pain I caused to my victim's family and the burden I placed on my own family. Shame for my senseless act taints every daily activity, even my asking God's forgiveness. I strive to make restitution, both to the victim's family and to society. I cannot find atonement and readily accept punishment for my horrible behavior.

Murray does not seem to have any demons sitting on his bunk. But I know they'll find him; if not now then after his choice of departure has been made.

Jon H. Gary
High Desert State Prison
Susanville, Calif.

License to Criticize

Melvin A. Goodman ["The Politics of Getting It Wrong," November 2000] may be accurate in describing *The Cold War's End* as "incomplete, deceitful, and perhaps even dangerous." The book is, after all, a collection of documents that the CIA compiled to defend its performance at the end of the Cold War. Goodman's persuasiveness, however, is lessened by error.

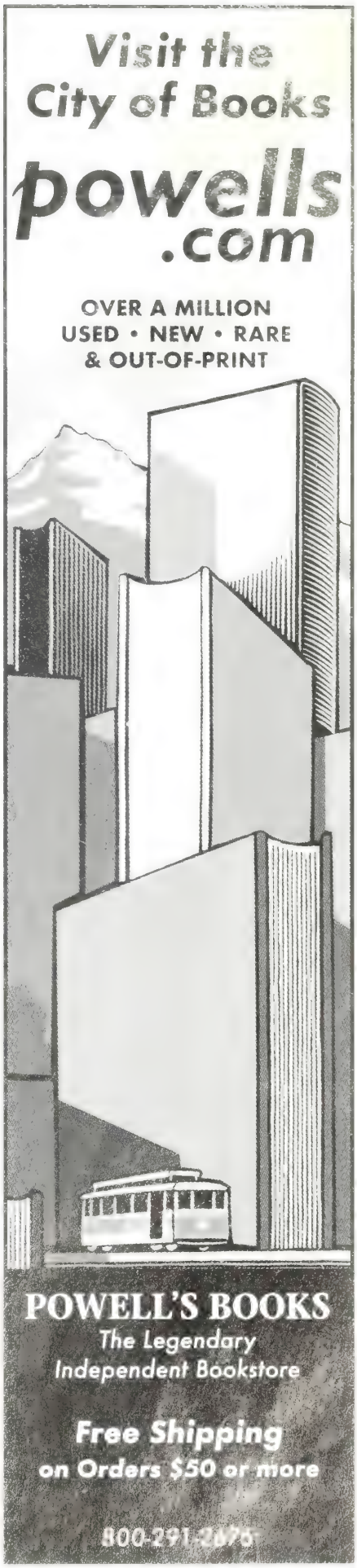
He neglects to mention William Webster, who was CIA director between May 1987 and August 1991, in his five-page discussion of those responsible for the CIA's failure to detect and interpret obvious signs of Soviet collapse. Webster was director during the years Goodman discusses, and Webster's successors—including Robert Gates, James Woolsey, John Deutch, and George Tenet—do not escape Goodman's unflattering comments; they only add to the oddity of Webster's absence. Goodman scolds Woolsey for failing to properly chastise CIA officials who did not aggressively hunt the traitor betraying America's Soviet assets. Yet he writes nothing about Webster's aloofness from this [illegible] mole hunt though Webster headed the FBI, and later the CIA, during the years (1985–1991) when nothing worthwhile [illegible] their agency to detect [illegible]

Daniel F. Daly
Frederick, Md.

Melvin A. Goodman responds:

Daniel F. Daly correctly notes the omission of William Webster from the list of mediocre CIA directors over the past two decades. I omitted Judge Webster because he was the only director of central intelligence in this period who actually tried to understand the problem of politicization that had occurred, from 1981 to 1987, under the leadership of CIA director William Casey and Deputy Director for Intelligence Robert Gates. Webster brought a young lawyer, Mark Matthews, with him from the FBI and gave him the task of investigating the issue of politicization. The lawyer correctly identified many politicized reports, including a CIA assessment that described a nonexistent Soviet plot against Pope Paul II and a wildly off-the-mark intelligence estimate of a Soviet threat to Iran. Casey and Gates concocted the tale of the papal plot to undermine the detente policy of Secretary of State George Shultz. They commissioned the spurious story of the threat in Iran from a thirty-year veteran of the directorate of operations and used that estimate to justify arms sales to so-called moderates in Iran; one major way Casey and Gates contributed to the origin of Iran Contra in 1985, this incident led to Gates's failure to gain confirmation in 1987 as director of central intelligence. Judge Webster immediately dissociated himself from these false analytical lines and sent the signal to the CIA's analytical community that he would not tolerate politicization.

Daly is correct, however, that Webster remained aloof from the mole hunt that eventually ferreted out Aldrich Ames. Webster actually fell asleep during a counterintelligence briefing on the Ames [illegible] done to CIA operations against the Soviet Union. Since the only intelligence experience [illegible] brought to the CIA from the FBI was knowledge of counterintelligence, his failure to contribute to the ten-year search for Ames [illegible]



NOTEBOOK

The dimpled chad

By Lewis H. Lapham

When I die—if I die—I want to be buried in Louisiana so I can stay active in politics.

—Earl K. Long

Until the presidential election ran afoul of events in Florida in the early morning of November 8, the interested parties had managed to keep the politics out of the politics—behind the rope lines, off the podium, out of the camera shots and the conversation. For nearly twelve months the Republican and Democratic campaigns had assumed that in place of politics—a word they associated with "partisan ugliness" and "angry name-calling"—they could substitute handsomely framed photo opportunities and winsomely edited television commercials. Why not? Who would care?

The country apparently was at ease with itself, enjoying its prosperity and content with its toys; no wars loomed on a distant horizon, and the presumed apathy of a supposedly ignorant electorate suggested a general preference for a government so securely checked and balanced that it could do nothing that might upset the golden applecart of the Dow Jones Industrial Average.

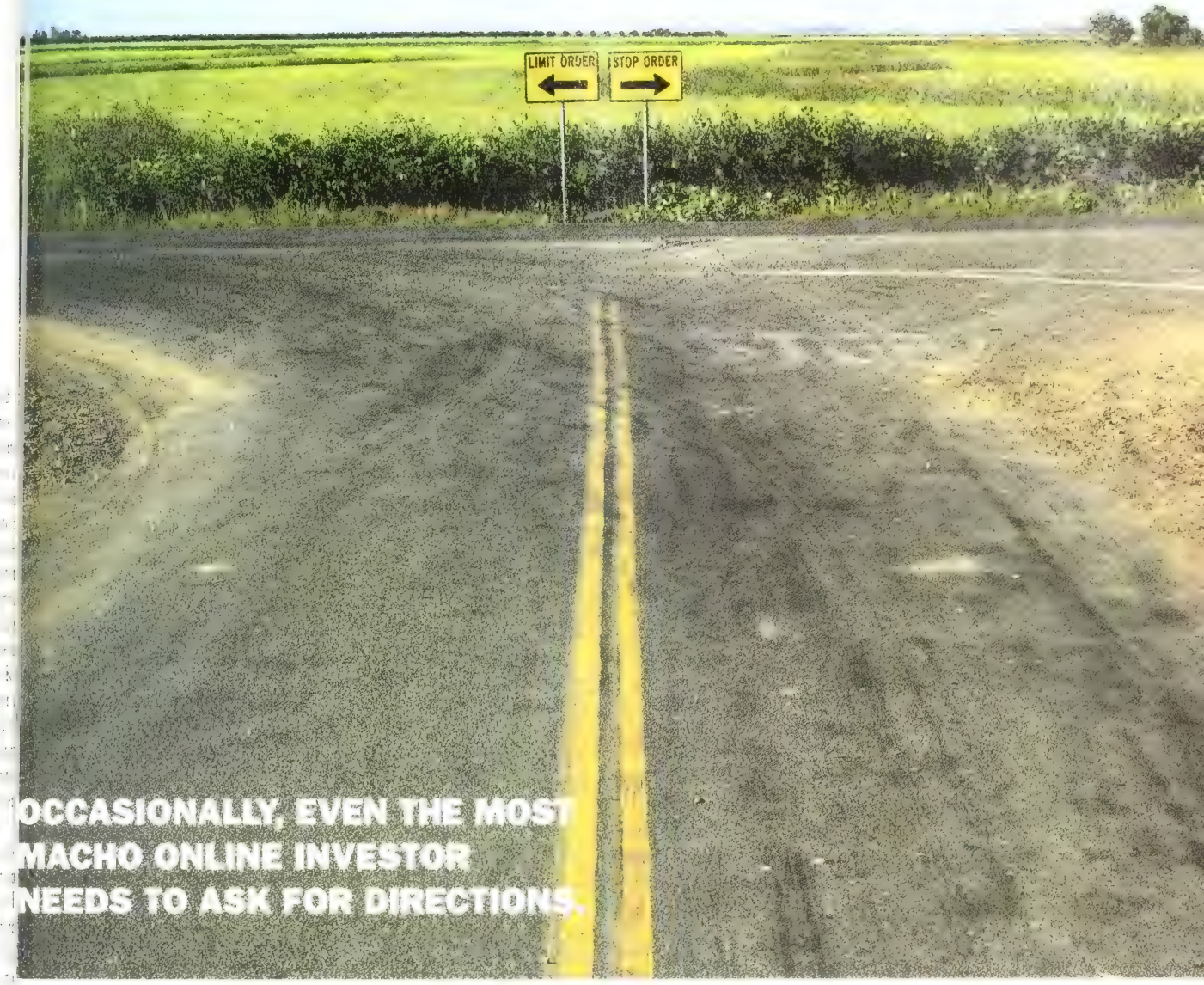
What was wanted was a POTUS conveniently impotent, and the requirement favored the qualities of Governor George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore—two ornamental sons of the American plutocracy bearing well-known national brand names and with as little difference between them as Pepsi and Coke, both capable of cameo appearances on *Oprah* and well enough schooled in the art of foraging for money to know where to stand and when to crawl.

If neither candidate commanded a broad or popular following among the American people, what difference did it make? The trend of the times over the last twenty years has reduced the figure of the president of the United States from a leading to a supporting role, and either the Governor or the Vice President would pass muster as the corporate spokesman for America the Beautiful. Maybe they weren't as good at making the pitch as either Ronald Reagan or Bill Clinton, but at least they could memorize a script, hit their marks, know their place, and because each of them so often found it necessary to say that he was his own man, even the dullest voter would be encouraged to understand that he wasn't. Surely the country was safe enough and rich enough to afford the luxury of two gentlemen from Verona or the Ivy League so amiably lacking in conviction that their words could be relied upon to mean as little as possible.

Any other year and the modest sets of accomplishment might have proved sufficient. Neither candidate fell off a bandstand or a parade float; the Vice President discovered the secret of studio makeup, the Governor learned how to pronounce the name Slobodan Milosevic, and over the course of the summer campaigns they obligingly displayed their talents as character actors in the various personae of visiting clergyman, bedside companion, late-night talk-show clown. Drawn by the gravitational force of the opinion polls to the still center of amiable consensus (i.e., the great good American place where nothing changes and everybody gets rich), both candidates cheerfully avoided most of the topics apt to excite controversy, and with regard to the standard operating procedures of the oil, banking, and telecommunications monopolies they were as silent as the ball washers at a country-club golf tournament. Resolute in their opposition to breast cancer, forthright in their commitment to dignity and leadership, uncompromising in their support of better days, bluer skies, and secure retirement, they were always glad to pose for Kodak moments on an aircraft carrier or a kindergarten chair. Most importantly, they put to rest any lingering suspicions that they might be interested in politics as an experiment with anything dangerous or new.

Not a brilliant campaign, but adequate to its purpose, and one that under ordinary circumstances would have resolved itself into the customary victory celebration (many balloons, joyful applause) and the corollary concession speech (scattered tears, noble melancholy). By the time the polls opened on Election Day the prospect of a vote "too close to call" presented the news media with a better show than anybody had thought possible after the summer nominating conventions. The television anchorpersons inflated the sporting analogies as soon as the polls closed on the East Coast—Tom Brokaw promising his viewers a wild and thrilling roller coaster ride through the theme parks of American history; Dan Rather announcing a contest "hot enough to peel house paint."

During the first few hours of the nationwide count of the election returns, the mood in the broadcast booths remained upbeat and sunny. For two weeks the studio people had been promoting the drama of narrow margins on the assumption that the



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were hyping an otherwise mediocre story about two second-tier celebrities, and they didn't draw too careful a distinction between democracy as a system of government and democracy as a form of entertainment—"Here we all are in Democracyland, folks! Stay tuned! Don't go away! We'll be right back with Cokie and Jeff and Rutherford B. Hayes!" Accustomed to believing themselves the creators of the character of the American president (whether the role happens to be played by Michael Douglas on HBO, Richard Nixon on the History Channel, Bill Clinton on C-Span, or Harrison Ford on Cinemax), the news and entertainment media had seen the summer campaigns as an audition for a four-year gig in the Oval Office. The White House set by now has become as familiar as Jerry Seinfeld's apartment or the booth on *Monday Night Football*, and the political analysts know where to look for the Marine helicopter and the portrait of George Washington. When obliged to drum up interest in national affairs, they ask questions not much different from those of the film critics. How will next season's situation comedy differ from the undignified burlesque of the Bill Clinton show? Is it an action movie or sentimental melodrama along the lines of NBC's *The West Wing*? How many women in the cast, and is the national security adviser insane?

Which was more or less the tone of the complacent commentary on MSNBC and at CNN headquarters in Atlanta until something began to go wrong with the news from Florida. Nobody knew who was making what kind of mistakes—some difficulties, apparently, with missing ballots, faulty voting machines, confused pensioners—but by 3:00 A.M. it had begun to look as if the election wasn't going to follow the studio scripts, and after having twice awarded the prize of Florida's electoral votes and the presidency to the wrong candidate, the anchorpersons in the broadcast booths were showing a marked resemblance to aquarium fish. Their mouths were opening and closing; they were floating around in their state-of-the-art habitat, the red-and-blue maps as colorful as tiny coral reefs, but when they peered into the glass wall of the camera, it was as if they were wondering what had happened to the Caribbean Sea.

Astonishingly, and for the first time in twelve months, the election news was about something other than Al Gore's hairstyle or George Bush's English springer spaniel. Few of the people in the broadcast studios were old enough to remember ever having seen such a thing as democracy—the living organism as opposed to the old paintings and the marble statues—and judging by the startled expressions in their faces, they didn't like the look of it. It hadn't been circumcised, and probably it was criminal.

By noon on Wednesday the politics were back in the politics, pushing through the rope lines and crowding into the camera shots. The election still being in doubt, the interested parties were off message and out of costume, and for the next several days the country was granted what John Adams knew to be the most precious right of a free people—"an indisputable, unalienable, indefeasible, divine right to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge, I mean of the characters and conduct of their rulers."

Although compressed into a brief time period, the impromptu course in civics was comprehensive, and if I don't have the space to mention all the points in the syllabus, two of them seemed especially instructive:

THE CANDIDATES

Revealed as popped balloons and empty boasts. Without a script neither the Vice President nor the Governor knew what to say, and as the days passed their wax images melted in the sun. The fine phrases (about "leadership," "restoring honor and dignity to the White House," "fighting for working families," "compassionate conservatism," etc., etc.) went missing in action. The two gentlemen from Verona elected to hide. Governor Bush retreated to his Texas ranch to pose for photographs in what he hoped was a presidential sort of way, among the props of a jury-rigged White House Map Room. During the campaign he had ac knowledged his dependence on th advice of his father's senior bagme (he knew their telephone numbe and promised to get in touch if some thing important came up), and whe confronted with the possible loss o the election in Florida, he sent Jame A. Baker III, his father's former sec retary of state, to fix the judge.

The Vice President retired into cloud of piety. Not having Coli Powell for a prop, he appeared briefl for the cameras with a football tha maybe once had been tossed arour a Virginia lawn by Jack or Bobb Kennedy. Like the Governor, th Vice President sought to convey a air of Olympian calm, as indifferen as Zeus to the struggles of mere mortal men and so devoted t democracy's holy cause that he didn wish to win the presidency "by a fe votes cast in error." He went on say that he was sure Governor Bus that great and loyal American, wou take the same view of the matte and the gorgeous sweetness of h hypocrisy was a wonder to behold.

THE ELECTORATE

By no means as apathetic as it customarily supposed by the Wash ington gentry and their attendan pundits, who conceive of democrati self-government as an heirloom or trust fund, a theatrical trunk which to find the costumes of a imaginary and risk-free past rathe than as a blueprint and a source energy with which to build a ne and therefore dangerous future.

Once the politics were in plai sight, out from behind the screen the soft-focus television commercia and the Hallmark greeting-car chatter of the Sunday talk-sho crowd, a very large number of peop expressed a keen and well-informe interest in the proceedings. The knew what they were looking a knew also that "partisan ugliness" the bone and marrow of democracy

All at once and without cue card the liveliness of the political deba was a match for the barroom discu sions of a World Series or a Sup Bowl. High school students who week earlier would have been har pressed to name three American pre

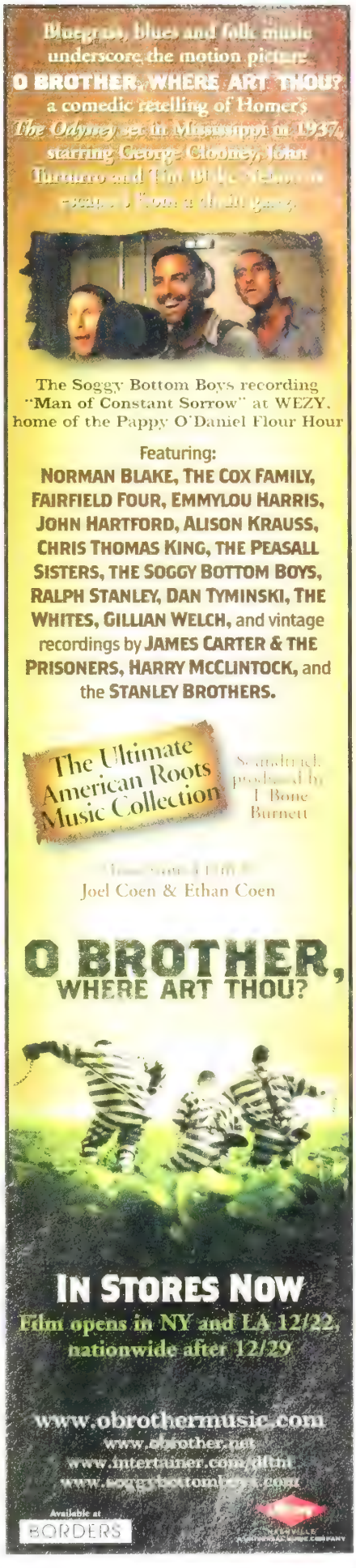
dents, living or dead, suddenly were king, and talking knowledgeably, out the Electoral College, the Fourteenth Amendment, and the prior-arrest records of select Florida politicians. Every news organization, daily paper as well as the radio and cable-television networks, reported audiences four and six times as large as those that had attended the O. J. Simpson trial or the funeral of Princess Di. Although various important persons, most of them government officials, stepped up to a microphone to suggest that one of the candidates graciously resign (for the sake of a democracy so fragile that it might get broken if somebody tried to take it out of the museum), the guests on the Leno and Letterman shows (more representative of the broader spectrum of American opinion) were asking one another why the Bush and Gore campaigns had forgotten to register the graveyard vote.

All present on both sides of the argument filed amicus curiae briefs in favor of high-minded sentiment (for the good of the country, on behalf of the Constitution), but in the context of a real argument taking place in real time with a real consequence in the offing, it wasn't hard to notice that the most selfless principle was usually the one that served the most selfish motive. Thus the Republican Congressman Connie Mack, affronted by the spectacle of Democrats actually trying to win the election—"They're politicizing the political process." Or Governor Bush's man Baker, pompous and indignant, complaining about "mischief" and "human error" as if politics ever had consisted of anything else.

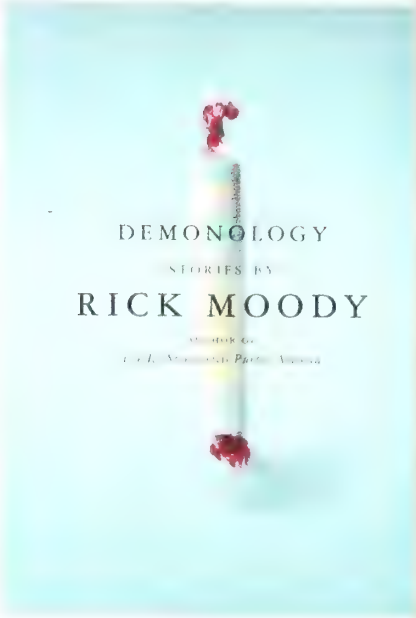
Ordinary citizens took the points more quickly than the legal and academic authorities delivering sermons from the pulpit of an op-ed page, and the more interesting commentary tended to show up on a newspaper letters page rather than on the network news broadcasts. Here were the American people, for the most part good-natured and patient, working their way around the lies to the harder and better questions that had been ignored or suppressed by the managers of the brightly packaged presidential campaigns. Who gets to say when the voting stops? To whom do we assign political sovereignty—to the polls or the courts? The state jurisdiction, then to a federal or a state court? Maybe it isn't such a good idea to form a government so securely checked and balanced that it becomes both harmless and inert? Maybe the country is neither rich enough nor safe enough to afford the weakness of two playpen politicians who don't know how to either win or steal an election?

Judging by what I could see or infer from the all-but-continuous television transmissions from Florida, the local political people (state senators, trial judges, members of county canvassing boards) were more seriously committed to the idea of democracy than were the Washington grandees extending the courtesy of a dissembling press conference. Unexpectedly, and against the grain of my own sarcasm, I was as moved as I was impressed by the sight of the precinct workers holding paper ballots up to the light, looking to see whether the chad was dimpled or bulged, hanging by two threads or three. The tactical circumstance obligated the Republican strategists to scorn them for their "shenanigans" and to mock them for their innocence. Mere human beings, said Mr. Baker and Mr. Bush, imperfect and subjective, incapable of meeting the uniform standards of a machine. The assertion served its expedient purpose, but the condescension missed the point. Democracy isn't made by a machine; it is made with the wit and courage of citizens willing to undertake, for low pay and no credit, a tedious and time-consuming search for a straight answer in a little square of perforated light.

As of this present writing the election remains in doubt, and it's not inconceivable that the next president of the United States will be named by the Supreme Court or the House of Representatives. But it's nobody can guess what happens next, we know from the lesson chalked up on the rotor [illegible] that we live in an energetic democracy that at least gives us a sporting chance at an inventive future—whether we rig it with persuasive speeches, artful lawsuits, or a dimpled chad. ■

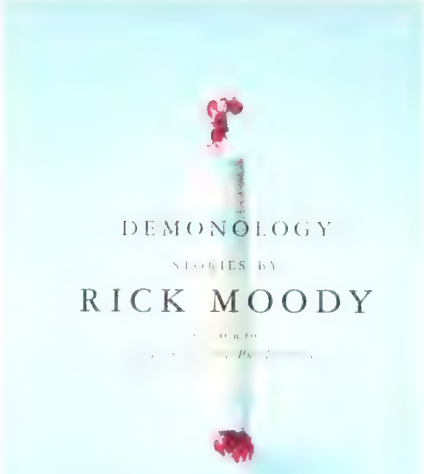


A brilliant new collection of stories from the author of *The Ice Storm*



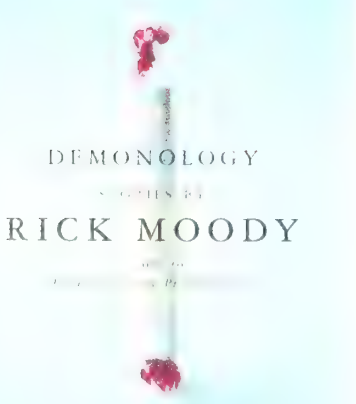
"I should write only of affection, I should make our travels in this earthly landscape safe and secure, I should have a better ending, I shouldn't say her life was short and often sad, I shouldn't say she had her demons, as I do too."

—DEMONOLOGY



"Moody displays his skills as a writer of intricate, finely woven, and often humorous fiction in this collection of short stories....One of the best writers working today."

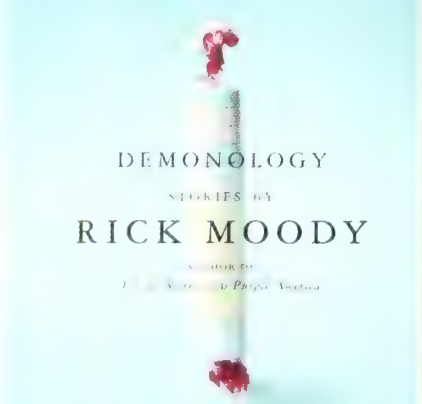
—Booklist



"Moody is that rare writer who can make the language do tricks and still suffuse his narrative with soul."

—Esquire

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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of the 614 arrests of protesters at last year's presidential conventions that have led to criminal convictions : 1

Number of last year's top ten soft-money donors that contributed to both major parties : 6

Average annual number of male clients served in America in 1999 by each female prostitute : 694

Rank of repetitive motion among factors that correlate with forearm pain among workers : 2

Rank of dissatisfaction with the level of "support from supervisors or colleagues" : 1

Number of British doctors who visited Cuba last March to study its health-care system : 115

Ratio of Britain's per capita health-care spending to that of Cuba : 11:1

Ratio of public housing units built in Jewish communities in Israel since 1975 to those built in Arab communities : 337:1

Number of land mines per square mile left behind in southern Lebanon by Israeli forces when they withdrew last May : 370

Amount the U.S. Army plans to pay the entertainment industry this year to develop training videos for combat : $45,000,000

Total number of hours spent on congressional hearings investigating violence in entertainment since May 1999 : 16

Percentage of FDA advisory meetings since 1998 in which at least one attendee had a financial conflict of interest : 92

Amount Florida state employees donated to the Bush campaign last year for every dollar they donated to Gore : $4.92

Percentage change since 1990 in corporate contributions to Japan's political parties : –68

Hours during which free speech is permitted in Singapore's Hong Lim Park : 7 A.M.–7 P.M.

Change since 1981 in minutes per day devoted to homework by Americans between nine and eleven years old : +9

Average age of a new U.S. grandparent in 1999 : 47

Chance that an American who visited an emergency room for a shuffleboard injury that year was a senior citizen : 1 in 2

Estimated number of Americans who have ever belonged to a nonprofessional self-help group : 25,000,000

Estimated number of Americans imprisoned in prolonged solitary confinement : 20,000

Number of studies showing that the death penalty is a deterrent, according to Attorney General Janet Reno : 0

Chance that the murder rate in a death-penalty state was lower in 1998 than the national average : 1 in 2

Chances that the rate in a state without the death penalty was lower than the national average : 5 in 6

Years that Mexico spent fighting a Texas death sentence given one of its citizens before his execution last fall : 9

Years that the United States spent fighting Lori Berenson's life sentence in Peru before she won a retrial last fall : 5

Percentage of the U.S. budget devoted to foreign developmental aid in 1962 and 2000, respectively : 3, 0.5

Ratio of Zambia's foreign-debt payments in 1999 to what it is projected to pay this year under proposed debt relief : 2:3

Percentage of the G-8 countries' combined military budgets it would take to halve the world's TB cases by 2010 : 0.4

Ratio of New York City residents who died of West Nile virus in 1999 to those who died of pneumonia or influenza : 1:619

Number of laws or provisions that require U.S. oil companies to produce more heating oil in response to a shortage : 0

Percentage of Kuwait's freshwater supply still contaminated with oil spilled by Iraqi forces during the Gulf War : 40

Percentage change in the maximum size of the ozone hole between 1999 and 2000 : +17

Factor by which the mass of a black hole at the center of the Milky Way galaxy exceeds the mass of the sun : 2,600,000

Ratio of the record distance for human space flight to the maximum distance depicted in *2001: A Space Odyssey* : 1:1,642

Number of high-tech start-ups funded with venture capital provided by the CIA since 1999 : 8

Percentage change since 1990 in the U.S. industrial-robot population : +138

Days after Al Gore's birth in 1948 that the States' Rights Party nominated Senator Strom Thurmond for president : 108

Rank of Thurmond, as senior majority senator, among those within a heartbeat of the presidency : 3

Year in which the levered voting machines used in some precincts last November were invented : 1892

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of November 2000. Sources are listed on page 89.

Mutual Fund Investing and the Environment. Some Said That It Couldn't Be Done.



The Green Century Balanced Fund Is Showing That It Can.

★★★★★

GREEN CENTURY FUNDS

READINGS

[Essay]

THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION

Adapted from "Turmoil in Palestine: The Basic Context," by Alex and Stephen R. Shalom, which appeared last October on ZNet, an online sister publication of Z Magazine. *Alex Shalom is a consultant in New York City. Stephen Shalom teaches political science at William Paterson University, in Wayne, New Jersey.*

The Palestinians desire emancipation. Through all the peace plans and negotiations this is the central question: how can Palestinians achieve the right of self-determination that for so long has been denied them?

More than half a century ago, the United Nations (which at the time had comparatively few Third World members) recommended the partition of Palestine into Palestinian and Jewish states, with the Jewish minority to receive most of the fertile land, and an internationalized Jerusalem. A civil war and then a regional war ensued, and when the armistice agreements were signed there was Israel, the Jewish state, but no Palestinian state and no international Jerusalem, both of which were divided between Israel and Jordan. The occupying Israelis, moreover, were not content simply to block the emergence of a Palestinian state; they wanted also to expel as many Palestinians as possible. This ethnic cleansing—forced expulsions facilitated by acts of terror—drove hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their ancestral lands to refugee camps where they lived in squalor. In 1967, Israel conquered Jordan's share of Palestine, creating a new wave of Palestinian refugees and subjecting many more to Israeli rule in the Occupied Territories.

To the Israeli government, justice for Palestinians has always been subordinate to Israeli desires for land, for scarce water resources, and for military supremacy in the region. The United States government likewise has disregarded Palestinian self-determination and human rights, motivated by its desire to see a dominant Israel that could help keep radical Arab nationalism in check in a region of great economic and strategic value.

Yasir Arafat was chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1974 when it was recognized by the U.N. (and by nearly every survey of Palestinian opinion) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. By the mid-1980s, however, Arafat and his lieutenants had been away from Palestine for many years, and their connection with Palestinian [illegible] West Bank and Gaza Strip began to weaken. In December 1987, after twenty years living under the system [illegible] Palestinians [illegible] resistance known as the Intifada. The Intifada is most often remembered for its vivid images of Palestinian children throwing stones at Israeli soldiers, who responded with automatic weapons, but it also included highly organized [illegible]

by the facile media equation of Palestinian and terrorist. In fact, the Intifada was a spontaneous, remarkably disciplined, and courageous popular uprising that was neither initiated nor controlled by the PLO leadership in exile—indicating that Arafat no longer spoke for the Palestinian people.

It thus came as something of a surprise when Arafat joined with then Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin to sign the 1993 Oslo Accords. The accords and subsequent Interim Agreement (Oslo II) provided for the division of the Occupied Territories into three "areas," A, B, and C. (No mention was made of a fourth area: Israeli-occupied East Jerusalem.) In area A, the Palestinian Authority (PA), headed by Arafat, was given civil control but not sovereignty; area B was to be controlled jointly, but in fact Israeli security forces were clearly in charge (Palestinian zoning laws mean little when Israeli authorities can demolish a house whenever they choose); and area C was wholly under Israeli control. In 2000, 12 percent of the West Bank was designated area A—where the vast majority of Palestinians lived; 27 percent was area B; and 61 percent, area C. In the Gaza Strip, area A consists of 80 percent of the land and contains 1.1 million Palestinians, one of the highest population densities in the world, while the 6,500 Israeli settlers live in the 20 percent controlled by Israel. Palestinians thus have limited "autonomy"—not sovereignty—over a small, non-contiguous portion of the West Bank and areas of dense population in the Gaza Strip, which essentially means that the PA is responsible chiefly for maintaining order over a people seething in poverty and despair.

The injustice of Oslo, however, is not simply a matter of percentages. The accords also provided for "final status" negotiations to cover issues including Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, and borders—in effect, putting the Palestinian right to self-determination itself up for negotiation. Most tellingly, although the U.N. General Assembly has regularly reaffirmed its 1948 resolution endorsing the right of refugees to return to their homes, Oslo left this as a matter for bilateral talks between Israel and the PA.

Israel, almost immediately after signing the Oslo Accords, began to preempt the final status negotiations by continuing its policy of establishing "facts on the ground." Israeli settlements—whose presence even the United States government had always considered a violation of international law—increased even more rapidly under Ehud Barak than under the right-wing Benjamin Netanyahu. Moreover, Israel linked the settlements with permanent, multi-lane highways running through Palestinian lands. Palestinian property was confiscated, crops uprooted, and houses demolished. Although the Oslo Agreements had reserved the question of settlements until the final status talks, there are now a few thousand tons of asphalt solidifying Israeli expropriations. And the United States government has provided lavish subsidies for this Israeli effort, none of which, needless to say, have gone to compensate Palestinians for lost land, crops, or homes.

The effects of these bypass roads go well beyond lost property. They divide the areas of Palestinian authority into tiny enclaves, cutting off Arab villagers from their fields and from one another. Rather than establishing the basis for an independent state, Oslo has created—as some honest Israeli commentators have noted—a system of "Bantustans." This is a provocative term, and certainly analogies to South Africa have their limitations, but there is no better term to describe a situation in which a people are given not self-determination but the right to police themselves, as they are squeezed into overpopulated, disconnected, and impoverished mini-territories, while the dominant state and its settlers keep for themselves the best land and resources. Israeli analysts may see this arrangement as more manageable than direct Israeli military rule over masses of Palestinians, but it is clear that a peace process that does not provide justice and self-determination to a long-suffering people is unlikely to provide much peace either.

Why, then, did Arafat accept this raw deal on behalf of his people? It appears that he was more interested in being the ruler of a Palestinian state, whatever its condition, than in continuing to seek a just solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Since his return to Palestine in the wake of Oslo, Arafat has ruled the Palestinian Authority with a brutally authoritarian fist and, despite some public posturing, has made further concessions to the Israeli government—even, at one point in 1998, relinquishing the Palestinian claim to any part of Jerusalem by accepting the notion that neighboring Abu Dis would suffice as the capital of a future Palestinian state. In so doing, Arafat has further alienated himself from the Palestinian people, who no longer see him as their champion but as a corrupt collaborator.

Prime Minister Barak, a former general and the leader of the Labor Party, is portrayed in the press as a pursuer of peace, willing to make concessions on important issues. But his fundamental position allows no compromise. In 1998, Barak declared that Labor has a "set of red lines which it will under no circumstances cross. . . . A unit-



Without Each Other [illegible]

ed Jerusalem must remain under full and unequivocal Israeli sovereignty, most of the population of the settlements will remain under Israeli rule in large settlement blocs, and no circumstances will we return to the 1967 lines." Whatever other concessions Barak might be willing to entertain, he has not backtracked on these basic conditions, and so real protection for Palestinians has been automatically precluded.

What role did Barak play in sparking the recent violence? No one could possibly have doubted that a tinderbox would [illegible] when Likud Party leader Ariel Sharon visited [illegible] Sharon to proclaim [illegible] Israeli sovereignty. Barak knew [illegible] and provided [illegible] of [illegible] police. [illegible] which Barak could have [illegible] of the event had he so desired is not clear, but there is no evidence that Barak had [illegible] event, the role Barak played in Sharon's visit [illegible] Barak's overall role in the Israeli [illegible] to be supportive [illegible] the Israeli military's vicious lack of restraint

the killing of an unarmed cowering twelve-year-old boy, the killings of scores of others, the maiming of thousands, the "repeated use of lethal force against Palestinian ambulances, medical personnel, field hospitals, and clinics engaged in treating or evacuating injured civilians" (Human Rights Watch), the frequent resort to "excessive use of lethal force in circumstances in which neither the lives of security forces nor others were in danger" (Amnesty International), and the blasting of apartment buildings by tank and helicopter gunships.

As for Arafat's role in the latest violence, he can be viewed as an initiator only to the extent that his role in the Oslo process has made conditions in the Occupied Territories ripe for violence. What has inflamed the Palestinians—and world opinion, at least outside the United States—was the provocation of Sharon and the bloody actions of the Israeli military; no orders from Arafat were needed to bring thousands of enraged Palestinians into the streets. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that, given Israel's savage history with respect to the Palestinians, Arafat might have anticipated this sort of Israeli overreaction, perhaps allowing him to regain some of his lost credibility and putting some international pressure on the Barak government. But neither Arafat's attempts to keep up with Palestinian popular sentiment nor the horrific revenge killings committed by some Palestinians (such as the mob murder of two Israeli soldiers in Ramallah) change the basic situation: this uprising has been a legitimate, indigenous response to the denial of Palestinian rights, Israel's brutal occupation, and Arafat's capitulation.

The violence has not been confined to the Occupied Territories. Israeli Arabs have taken to the streets to challenge their continued second-class status in the Jewish state and to express solidarity with Palestinians under occupation. Israeli Arabs face fierce prejudice and harsh discrimination in education, military service, and employment; 80,000 are particularly oppressed, living in "phantom villages" that the Israeli authorities neither recognize nor supply with running water, electricity, or connecting roads. As Israeli Arabs, like Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories, have begun to protest, they too have incurred Israeli wrath, and security forces have killed more than a dozen of them.

What will come of this latest violence is unclear. Certainly the dire poverty in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the repression by Arafat's police, and the hopelessness of the Oslo process are factors that make another full-scale Intifada possible. And Barak has made clear how he would answer any such uprising: the Israeli defense forces would use "all means at their disposal" and they would do so "even if it is against the whole world." And indeed Israel is unlikely to concern itself with international pressure as long as the United States continues to flack for Israeli barbarism. U.S. officials may work to quiet outbursts of violence, but they still fail to insist that Israel offer justice to the Palestinians. Peace and justice in the Middle East will never occur until Washington stops giving Israel a blank check. And that will require decisive action by the American people.

[Confession]

MY OWN TRUTH

From an interview, conducted by Nadire Mater, with a thirty-year-old former soldier who served in Turkey's military between November 1995 and April 1997. The interview appeared in Mehmed's Book, *a collection of Mater's interviews with soldiers who fought in Turkey's war against Kurdish separatists. In September, an Istanbul court overturned the government's ban on the book and dismissed charges that could have imprisoned Mater for twelve years, for "insulting and belittling" the Turkish military or government. Kurds make up 25 percent of Turkey's population. Thirty-five thousand people have died in the Kurdish war, which began in 1984 and represents the largest use of U.S. weapons anywhere in the world by non-U.S. forces. Mater writes for the news agency Inter Press Service. Translated from the Turkish by Ertugrul Kürkçü.*

Our initial training was quite heavy. They took sixty-five of us to Çatalkaya to be trained on village raids, and they told us what the people they call terrorists did. They told us that terrorists would put hand grenades inside glasses. That we should not kick metal containers of any kind, as they might contain bombs. That we should not touch the dead. That when terrorists are wounded, just before they die, they place a hand grenade under their stomach area, so that when you turn them over, it explodes: you can die then and there; instead of turning them over yourself, they said, you should tie a string on their feet and turn them by pulling. That we should be cautious about where we put our feet when we walked.

Perhaps because our family originally came from the East, I used to believe that people in the East were right and that they faced injus-

tice. In the military I was told the opposite story. They told us that these terrorists wanted to divide our country and that they killed children. I have a special love for children, so I started to change my ideas.

When I myself went to the East and saw what was happening there, I realized that many of the things they attributed to the terrorists were in fact done by soldiers. I saw both sides. And in this way I found my own truth.

I am a musician, so I was given a position at the military's recreation facility in Diyarbakir, as a guard at the entrance door. We checked the identity cards of those going in and out. According to orders, everyone was obliged to present their identity cards. If you had the slightest suspicion, you were ordered to shoot. The captain who gave us orders used to say: "You should be like terrorists; people should fear you." We used to pull people from the outside and hit them because they had stared at us. "Don't hit too hard," the captain would say. When the people we hit left, he'd say: "That's exactly what you should do."

The first person I hit was a small child. He was throwing stones. Five or six of us hit him. He was maybe thirteen years old. There was a wall there, and we used to hit them behind the wall. For instance, suppose we saw that a child was picking our flowers. The colonel would shout: "Can't you see that he has picked those flowers?" We would say: "Yes, we have seen, sir." "Pull him in, then," the colonel would respond. We would call the child and pull him in. We would be pumped up and hit him hard with the butts of our rifles. Then we'd have him wash up and leave.

At one point I said, "It shouldn't be this way. This isn't me." I started to pull myself together. Then I was criticized because there were no disturbances, no terror, no complaints, at the door. I was put in jail for a week on the charge that I wasn't performing my duty. If there are disturbances at the door, I realized, then everything looks in order. I used my brain. So they wanted unrest at the door?

I started interrogating the officers. "You should show your I.D.!" I would say to those who didn't. Some of them would pull out their guns in response. I started to lose my integrity. They told me to see a doctor. But the major was happy, and he didn't mind what the others said.

When I messed with the high-ranking officers, I faced problems. Even when they were in uniform, I had the authority to ask for I.D. cards. One day, they were expecting a brigadier general in a civilian vehicle, from Malatya, I think. I was on duty at the door, but no one had told me that a general would be coming. A

[Poem]

ENDORSE THE RESURRECTION

Three poems from Speech! Speech! *by Geoffrey Hill, published by Counterpoint. Hill is the author of many books, including* The Triumph of Love, *a poem. He teaches in the University Professors program at Boston University.*

O CLEAVE Memory, to take my name
for acts indifferent and true to type.
How formally this begins. There are accidents
you can see coming, whose actual
speed of occurrence is in slow motion.
This is not one. But metaphor jaws clamp
shut on floating perception and hang there:
now gutted and despatched. I see Mort
the ever watchful, cuttlefaced, [illegible]
Just so. I worked the celebrated
elaborate Italian locks, the self-barbed
open-to-shut *concetti* of blind eyes.

Revive the antimasque of baroque
methane: time and death—that rot, a fake
Shakespearean girning, a mouth's pained O,
the soul exhaled as a perfect smoke-ring,
clownish efforts made to bind the corpse-jaw,
skeletal geezers like kids again with bad
joke-book toothache, Dr Donne's top-knot shroud,
coroneted bag-pudding (*show-off!*). Face
the all but final degradation [illegible]
[illegible] reorder
the Jacobean Sermon, re-set Burton's
Anatomy, endorse the Resurrection.

That's great they say now I have come this far.
But still, my brothers and sisters, baroque
is beautiful. You also have beauty.
Why could I not have foreseen this: we
were meant for [illegible] sensual
the gifts of sex, of oratory, in both
unequalled. Ogled by reborn commerce,
nó, I will not speak straightly but abide
my chamhood on the block. As I can show you:
the bronze equestrian Union trumpeter,
coated with a green patina of swamps,
up from the Wilderness: less strange now than
we are.

'80s flashback

- Spandau Ballet True 2210
- [illegible]
- The Go Go's Our Lips Are Sealed 2211
- A Flock Of Seagulls I Ran 2200
- Billy Squier Lonely Is The Night 2202
- Debbie Gibson Lost In Your Eyes 2203
- Great White [illegible]
- Kim Carnes Bette Davis Eyes 2205
- Modern English I Melt With You 2207
- Red Rider Lunatic Fringe 2208
- Richard Marx Right Here Waiting 2209
- The Kinks Destroyer 2212
- The Knack Good Girls Don't 2213
- [illegible]
- Mar Inon Kayleigh 2206

country comfort

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  Wild And Wicked 2275
- Bobby Pulido Mi Alma Esta Enamorada 2351
- Carlos Ponce Decir Adios 2352
- Ednita Nazario Corazon 2353
- Graciela Beltran Mi Corazon Es Tuyo 2354
- Intocable Eres Mi Droga 2355
- Jailene Siempre Contigo 2356
- [illegible]
- Los Tucanes De Tijuana Secuestro De Amor 2360
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- Millie De Hoy En Adelante 2362
- Ruben Blades Buscando America 2363
- La Mafia Si Tu Supieras 2358
- Jennifer Y Los Jetz Que Paso 2357
- Pieces Of A Dream Keep It Smooth 2422
- Ronnie Laws Solid Ground 2423
- Ronnie Laws Always There 2424
- Stanley Jordan The Lady In My Life 2425
- Bobbi Humphrey Harlem River Drive 2411

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- Academy of St.-Martin-in-the-Fields (Marriner cond.) Pachelbel–Canon in D Major 2260
- Andre Previn London Symphony Orchestra Gershwin–Rhapsody In Blue 2261
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- Max Lasser's Ark Learn, My Child 2387
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- Michael Whalen Spirits 2391
- Suzanne Ciani Love Song 2393
- Suzanne Ciani The Fifth Wave
  Water Lullaby 2394
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- Michael Gettel Angel's Landing 2388

pop & soul

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- Billy Ocean Suddenly 2396

jazz standard time

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- Billie Holiday Them There Eyes 2
- Cassandra Wilson Someday My Prince Will Come 2
- Charlie Parker Body And Soul 2
- Chet Baker My Funny Valentine 2
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  The Deep Blue Sea 2
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car stopped, a really nice car. The doors opened and an old guy stepped out. I wasn't sure whether I should ask for I.D. or not. He was obviously a high-ranking officer. But I decided to ask. I told him I needed to see his I.D. "Son, I am a pasha," he said. I said, "You might be a pasha, but I need to see your I.D." "Son, I am telling you that I am a pasha," he replied. My friends were making signs to let him in. "It doesn't matter," I said. "I need to see your I.D. I can't let in everyone who tells me they are a pasha. If you are a pasha, this is for your own security." The pasha said, "Well done, stubborn," and showed me his I.D. When I realized what his rank was, I changed my posture and said, "Thank you, sir." The major came and congratulated me—the pasha had praised security at the door. If he had complained, I would have been in trouble.

There were times when we hit women. One was mentally disabled, but we didn't know. When I was given an office job as a clerk, I had to train my friend who was taking my place at the door. He was getting harassed by this lady. We told her to go, but she wouldn't. Normally, we're ordered to stay at least five meters away from people: if you're too close, you can be stabbed, or they could be carrying a bomb. Because she wouldn't leave, my friend pushed her, and then we did, too. The woman started shouting and throwing stones. We hit her a couple of times and sent her away; she came back again and we hit her again. We had lost ourselves. We didn't know what we were doing. We must have kicked her, and even hit her with the butts of our guns. "Are you crazy?" some of our friends said when they saw what we were doing. We were so brainwashed. But you have to obey orders. If you don't, the punishment is clear. You get a disciplinary punishment and get tried at the military court. The rules were hard. When I went to bed I thought about it: Why did I do it? Can I find her and say I'm sorry?

I became a clerk. I started reading the documents that came from intelligence. As a clerk, I had the authority to read them. Some were secret documents. They contained information about incidents in the region. They included calendars that the terrorists used, their photographs taken on snowy mountains, poems that they had written. The colonel would joke with me, saying, "Look at the bastard, he's even written poems." Even when I liked the poem, I would pretend not to and say, "Right sir, look at what the bastard has done." That's how I had to present myself.

Before I went to Diyarbakir, the Bolu commandos camped close to our unit and showed us videos from the operations they had participated in. In one of the videos, they ask a terrorist boy, "Where are the others?" They tell him that he'll be set free if he tells the truth. The child tells them things. Then they throw him out of the helicopter. They kill him there. That is what I witnessed. I saw transparent things in the commandos' hands and asked what they were. One of the commandos said, "These are ears, man." "Ears?" I asked. Apparently, they cut the ears off the terrorists they kill, put them in Coca-Cola until the cartilage comes out. Then they use them as key chains.

They told us about how they raped girls in the villages. When they went into a village, their captain would call to the women in the village and ask, "Where are your men?" "They are in Istanbul, working," the women would say. He'd reply, "Bull . . ."—I don't want to say the slang—"they're in the mountains, fighting." Then he would tell his soldiers they could do whatever they wanted.

While doing my military service, I used to pull my gun on everyone around. I had totally lost it. I even pulled the trigger once, but the gun didn't fire. They asked me, "Are you crazy?" The officers started fearing me. They started pulling out their I.D.'s meters in advance. I became a terrorist. Like they said, I became a real terrorist.

We were wasted for nothing. It wasn't clear whom we were serving and whom we were fighting against. The people we face are also people of this country. Against whom are we directing our weapons? Those people have a reason to fight in the mountains. Why am I in the military?

I started searching for legitimation. I was seriously considering going to the mountains myself. They thought I was joking. They started calling me a terrorist. I wanted them to think I was a psychopath. I extinguished a cigarette on my arm. I wanted to break my shoulder so that they would send me away. I had the guys kick me to break my bones.

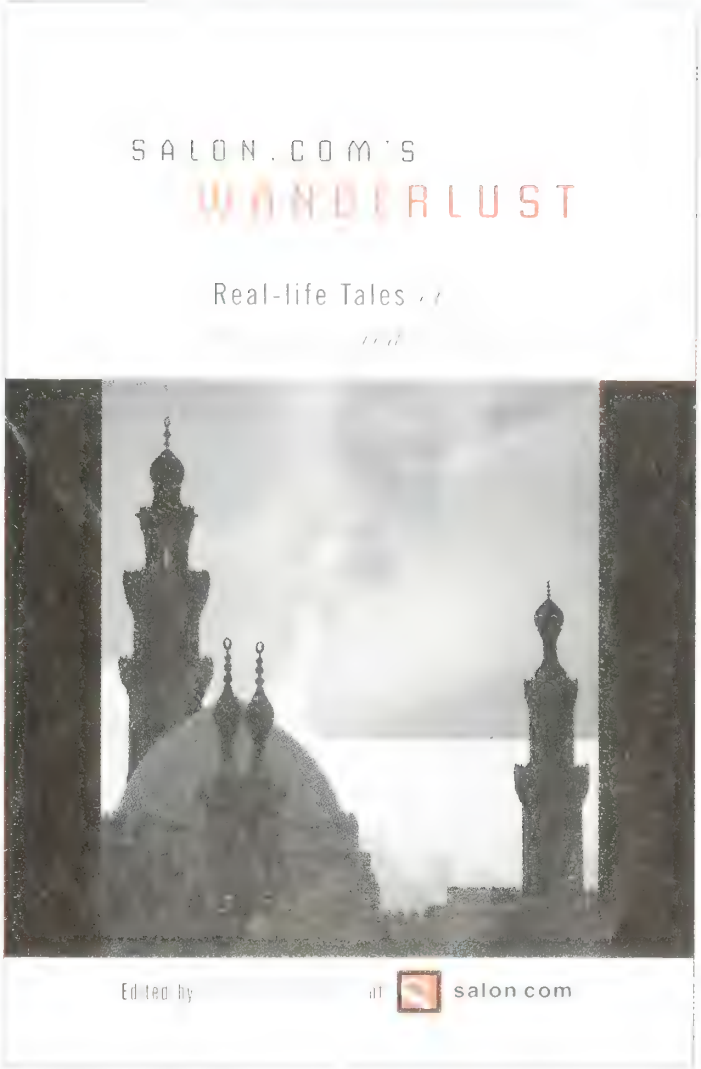
At that point they gave me a leave for twenty days and told me to stay there. I started to drink alcohol. I got married, and now we are expecting a child. My life has changed; now I have more responsibilities. I don't find myself too nervous anymore. My mom was always angry with me that I didn't do something to cure myself, but I have found my own cure. I told myself that I should be good. I internalized the idea that "the sun shines after every storm."

Now, if I am sad, I know it will be fine in a couple of days. Now I am doing well. I have no more problems.

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[Drama]

BANANA SPLIT

From a July episode of Our Neighbors, Ourselves, *a biweekly Burundian radio program created in Belgium by Burundi expatriate Marie-Louise Sibazuri. In 1997, Burundi's military asked that the program, which seeks to promote harmony between Hutus and Tutsis, be broadcast in the evenings for the entertainment of on-duty soldiers; 85 percent of Burundians now listen to the show regularly. Since 1993, more than 200,000 people have died in Burundi's civil war. Translated from the Kirundi by Jean-Pierre Nkunzimana.*

ACT I

CASSILDA and BITWI, monologues

CASSILDA: Barukinamwo! Barukinamwo! Where did he go, that stupid child? He has no idea how busy I am. Oh, my! I'm getting old. I'm reprimanding my child for being absent when I'm the one who sent him away! [*Laughing*] I forgot. [*Happily*] No, I have to invite the neighbors! No, I don't dare sell the first banana beer I've produced since my repatriation. Frankly speaking, beer is important but not more important than neighbors. How could I have repatriated if people hadn't told me to be brave and to come back to my former farm? How could I have met my family's needs or provided shelter for my children? The neighbors fed my children and built a house for us. Ooh, what poor conditions I was living in! When they stuck a letter on my door informing me of a rebel attack on my family, neighbors bravely intervened and defeated them. I wonder if the attackers were really rebels or other terrorists? But anyway, they all disappeared, thanks to my neighbors. Let me organize the dishes; today people are coming for a party. Everything is ready, and we are just waiting for the neighbors to arrive and start drinking.

BITWI [*Angrily*]: People say Cassilda has prepared banana beer for free. If she hadn't repatriated, I could have harvested her bananas and sold them! Oh, how unlucky I am! I wonder why only Cassilda accepted repatriation while everyone else remained? When she was repatriated, I thought lack of food and shelter would force her to return to the refugee camps, but unfortunately the neighbors provided everything, as though she had given birth to a king! When the same neighbors decided to help her cultivate her farm, she became the richest person in the village! She does not feel the hunger that afflicts us all. Now that she's offering free beer she will be considered president! If I weren't so afraid of the police, I would go steal her harvest. [*Long pause*] Well, those people may be intelligent, but I am not stupid either. Let me spread this story I imagined, [*laughing*] so the neighbors will send her back to where she came from like a football.

ACT II

MUKAMUNWA and BITWI

MUKAMUNWA: Let me hurry up so I can have a glass of that banana beer. This is an honor for me and very good for Cassilda. I really appreciate her hosting the neighbors to show her gratitude for their warm welcome. This will be encouraging to the next refugees who decide to come back home. [*Bitwi approaches, coughing*] Look at that stupid boy. He is hopeless, because he doesn't want to work for a living. He should follow the example of my son, Mbambanyi.

BITWI: I beg your attention. Can you give something?

MUKAMUNWA: We have given to others.

BITWI: I can enjoy the leftovers.

MUKAMUNWA: Why don't you look for a job?

BITWI: I can't find one.

MUKAMUNWA: Do you think people find jobs waiting for them in the road? Take a hoe and start farming like everybody else!

BITWI: I am not strong enough.

MUKAMUNWA: But you always have pocket money! Well, tell me what brings you here, or I'm leaving.

BITWI: You're invited to Cassilda's banana beer party?

MUKAMUNWA: I was the first to be invited.

BITWI [*Bitterly*]: That makes sense. I hear you were among the first people to welcome her.

MUKAMUNWA: Of course I welcomed her. You want her to settle unaided, as though she had no neighbors?

BITWI [*Sarcastically*]: I'm sure she'll show her gratitude to everybody tonight.

MUKAMUNWA: It's true. Those who helped her brew the beer said it is of the best quality. [*Joking*] Ladies who don't tighten their loincloths will leave them on the road going home.

BITWI: They will leave more than loincloths; they'll leave themselves.

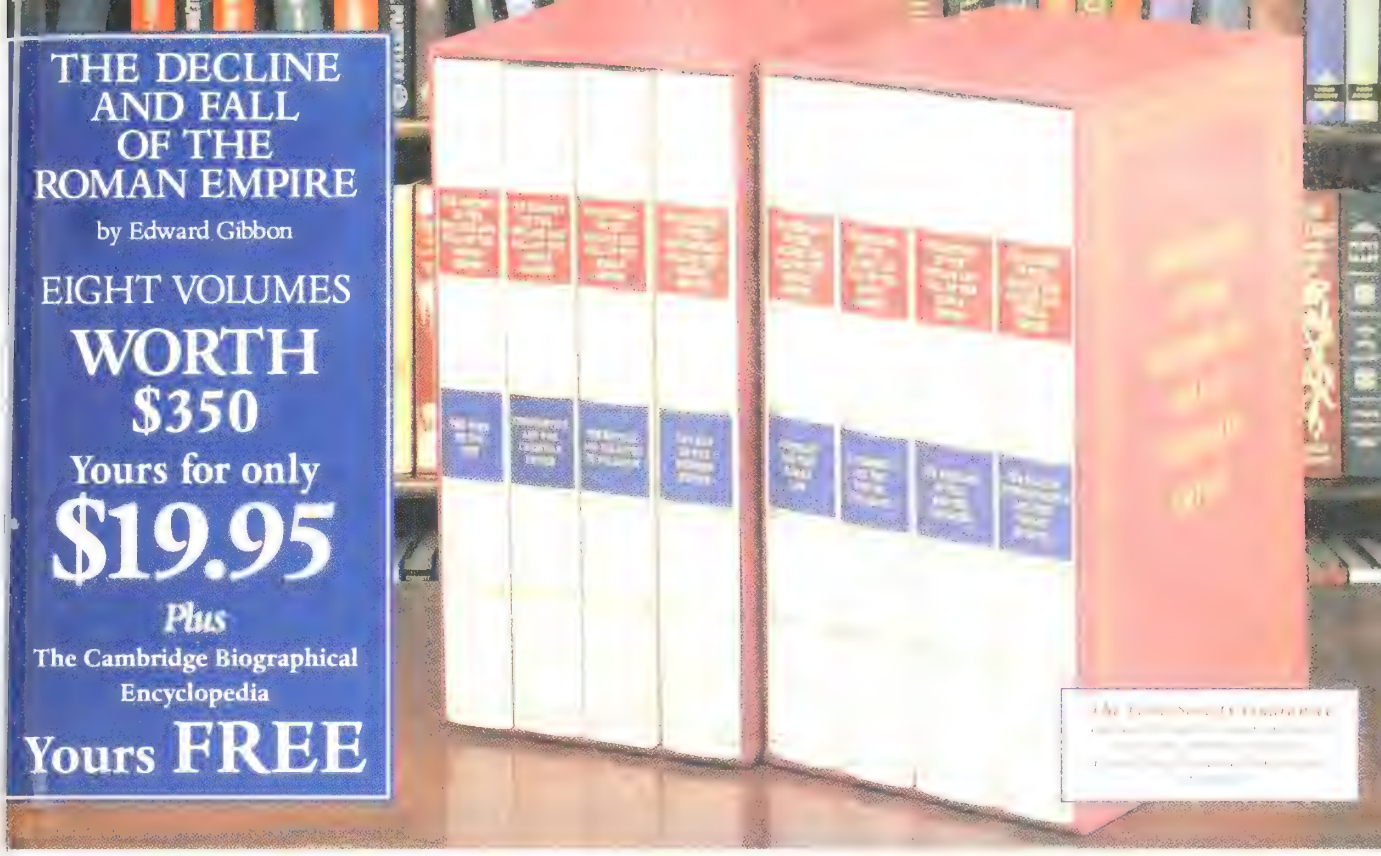
MUKAMUNWA: Where?

BITWI: In the road.

MUKAMUNWA [*Laughing*]: Yes, when you drink enough you can't even feel the cold. You always sleep easily after banana beer. I can see you are not invited.

BITWI: Lucky for me.

MUKAMUNWA: How could you possibly be glad to be excluded from drinking the best banana beer when you usually enjoy the worst?



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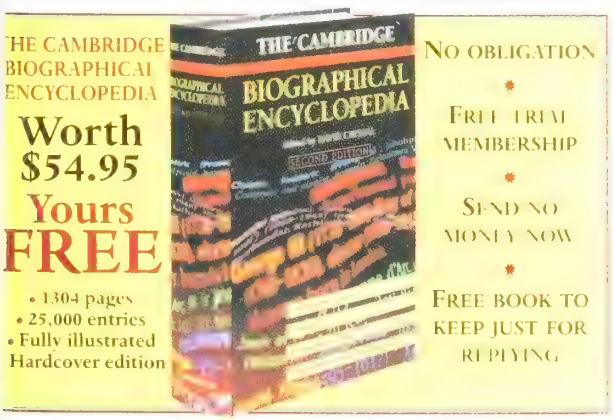
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Bonte, *by B. Barker, He used to eat rabbits*, last May at P.P.O.W., in New York City.

BITWI: I drink what's drinkable. If there's crocodile in it, I leave it alone.

MUKAMUNWA: What are you saying?

BITWI: As they say: if you have ears, you have heard.

MUKAMUNWA: Bitwi, what are you trying to hide?

BITWI: I am not hiding anything, but you hear what you want to hear.

MUKAMUNWA: What are you saying?

BITWI: I am saying that you are going to drink poisoned beer.

MUKAMUNWA: Where?

BITWI: At Cassilda's house, this former refugee you welcomed and consider your friend.

MUKAMUNWA: Will we be poisoned there?

BITWI: Why not? Those people never change.

MUKAMUNWA: Go away, and take your scandal from my veranda.

BITWI: Muk, do you know the tale about Namihungo? The hyena warned him, the crocodile warned him, but despite the warning he went to see the so-called father-in-law.

MUKAMUNWA: Bitwi, have you been sleeping okay lately?

BITWI: You mean, am I dreaming? You'll regret not heeding my warning. And it will be too late. Did you think she was repatriated to live peacefully with you? No way. She was sent to take revenge on you and your children.

MUKAMUNWA: Cassilda?!

BITWI: You know, you can't defend a child who isn't yours.

MUKAMUNWA: Even your own child can oppose you . . . Cassilda is . . .

BITWI: . . . like fire in a dry season. I understand she bought a large quantity of acid.

MUKAMUNWA: Is she planning our deaths, with all that we did to welcome her?

BITWI: Some things never change. Well, I

warned you. If you commit suicide, it won't be my fault. But don't tell anybody, especially not Cassilda, because her son Barukinamwo recently gave me a shirt.

MUKAMUNWA [*Aside*]: But how can I keep quiet? I can't. Let me run and warn everyone. Oh, I don't know where my husband is! Maybe he's drinking the poisoned beer!

BEWI [*Aside*]: There goes Mukamunwa! [*Laughing*] And she says I am jobless!

ACT III

BAPFUBUSA, MUBANO, and MUKAMUNWA

MUBANO: Bapfubu, are you ready? We have to hurry, or they'll finish the banana beer.

BAPFUBUSA: She'll put some aside for us. How are you?

MUBANO: I'm fine.

BAPFUBUSA: I can see that.

MUBANO [*Laughing*]: Of course you can see me, I'm standing right next to you!

BAPFUBUSA: I meant that you're looking smart.

MUBANO: Sure I am. My children are about to repatriate.

BAPFUBUSA: I heard fights have resumed around Bugarama.

MUBANO: Clashes are reported virtually everywhere. When I hear of them, I just pray and ask God to protect my children with humanitarian aid agents.

MUKAMUNWA [*Approaching, out of breath*]: Did you hear?

BAPFUBUSA: What? [*Joking*] If you don't slow down, you'll have a heart attack.

MUKAMUNWA: Don't laugh. Stay there if you like, I'm running.

MUBANO: Hey, are you going crazy?

BAPFUBUSA: By the way, where *are* you going?

MUBANO: Mukamunwa, is it beer that makes you run until smoke comes out of your mouth?

MUKAMUNWA: I told you not to laugh.

BAPFUBUSA: Do you want us to cry? [*Pretending to cry*] Yiiiii!

MUKAMUNWA: Don't pretend to cry. You'll really be crying later. Where is your husband?

BAPFUBUSA: He went to Cassilda's.

MUKAMUNWA: To Cassilda's? He must leave!

MUBANO [*Frightened*]: Is the place attacked?

MUKAMUNWA: She's the one who's attacking us. She put a lot of acid in the beer. Everyone who has drunk it is now in agony.

MUBANO: Cassilda?!

BAPFUBUSA: Is my old man among the victims?

MUKAMUNWA: I don't know, but I understand it is a scandal!

MUBANO: Let's run!

BAPFUBUSA: My child survived civil war and is now dying of poison?! This is horrible! I am going to kill myself! Let's go!!

[*Unintelligible*]. Why are they not coming? Is it that they have run back to their place for beer? Bapfubu, are you waiting for me?

MUBANO: Ooh, calm me. Tell me my child is not among the people who are advancing at Cassilda's house.

BAPFUBUSA: We must take revenge on her.

RUGO: Revenge on whom?

BAPFUBUSA: Cassilda. That snake that hides among people so that she may bite them.

RUGO: Where are you coming from, women?

BAPFUBUSA: From home. I hope you did not drink her so-called beer. I heard it is full of a poison called "sid."

RUGO: What are you talking about? Can beer also suffer from AIDS?

MUBANO: She didn't mention AIDS. She said "acid," which is a kind of poison.

RUGO: Who poisoned Cassilda's beer? Which way did he run?

MUKAMUNWA: You know, that which destroys a home does not come from afar. She poisoned the beer herself.

RUGO: Women, do you know what you're saying? You're talking nonsense.

MUBANO: You tell us the truth, since you've been there.

BAPFUBUSA: He hasn't been there, otherwise he couldn't be here!

RUGO: I'm just coming from there. I was just going to get some glasses to loan people.

BAPFUBUSA: I can't lend my glasses to that killer. Can you imagine! We helped her settle here while she was planning our deaths!

RUGO: Dear Bapfubu, we're lucky you're not a soldier or a magistrate. Otherwise you would shoot people pretending it was self-defense, or sentence people without knowing what they're accused of.

MUKAMUNWA: What about a person accused of poisoning her neighbors?

RUGO: Who is accusing her of this?

MUKAMUNWA: Witnesses.

RUGO: Where did she get [*unintelligible*]?

BAPFUBUSA: Others.

RUGO: Who, exactly?

BAPFUBUSA: Those who told her to come and kill us. You [*unintelligible*] where they are.

RUGO: What [*unintelligible*]? It sounds like you're relying on rumor.

BAPFUBUSA: You think we got the information from [*unintelligible*]?

RUGO: So why are you hiding your source?

BAPFUBUSA: Tell him the source, or he'll think we're liars.

MUBANO [*Whispering*]: I didn't ask for the source either. Who is he?

MUKAMUNWA: We were almost going to spill the beer and beat Cassilda. Was it wrong information? That silly Bitwi can easily influence someone to commit a crime.

RUGO: Did this story come from Bitwi?

BAPEUBUSA: If I had known the source was Bitwi, I would have doubted it. You can't believe him; he's a professional liar!

[illegible]: I wonder where he got the story? He doesn't even know Cassilda.

RUGO: You should have asked those questions *before* you acted. What if you hadn't met me? You never think twice! How can an agitator like Bitwi tell you to go right and left and you accept blindly?

[Exempla]

INSENSITIVITY TRAINING

From a "Teaching Assistant Handbook" on the University of Texas at Dallas website. The page was [illegible] last October.

WORDS AND PHRASES THAT OFFEND STUDENTS (Because of limited space, it is not feasible to list all of the phrases that offend minority students. Most of the ones listed here have been found to offend Black students, but they may be just as offensive to all minorities.)

An instructor to his class: "With the influx of wetbacks, the welfare rolls will increase."

"You are a good employee, for a minority person."

A white instructor to a Black student: "I don't understand what you people want."

Referring to a Black man: "You know the boy I mean."

A white instructor about Puerto Rican students: "Why should I teach them? They'll never learn."

A white instructor to a Black graduate assistant: "You're different from most Blacks I know."

To a minority student: "A 'C' is a good grade for you. Of all the Black students in the class, you made the highest grade."

A white instructor to a history class: "Slavery was not that bad for Blacks; it was better than unemployment."

"This is a good salary for a female."

A financial-aid officer to a minority student: "You don't look like you need financial aid."

An instructor to a Black student: "Are you sure you wrote this paper? It is well put together for a Black student."

Instructor to a minority student: "That's the trouble with you people; you think we owe you something."

A white instructor to an American Indian student: "I think your people have made great progress."

To a work-study student: "Do you like this better than housework?"

WORDS AND PHRASES YOU SHOULD NEVER USE WITH MINORITY STUDENTS (you should be equally careful of their use at any time):

[Words/Phrases—Groups Offensive To]
niggers—Blacks
gal(s)—Blacks
cuffs—Blacks
you people—All
spicks—Puerto Ricans
wetbacks—Mexican Americans
half-breeds—American Indians
spades—Blacks
chiefs—American Indians
greasers—Mexican Americans
Japs—Japanese Americans
chinks—Chinese Americans
boat people—Laotians, Vietnamese

NOTE—Not all minority students are affected by these items and actions in the same ways and to the same degree. There are many minority students who have strong role models at home and positive self-concepts.

[Transcript]

DERELICTION OF DOODY

From the deposition of Lawnlia Grant, the director of business affairs for NBC, in a pending lawsuit brought last year by the Detroit Institute of Arts against the estates of Rufus Rose, puppeteer, and actor Robert E. "Buffalo Bob" Smith, for possession of the Howdy Doody puppet used in The Howdy Doody Show, *which aired on NBC from 1947 to 1960. The deposition was conducted by Mark E. Block, a lawyer representing the Rose family. James M. Lichtman represents NBC; Frank J. Liberty represents the family of Buffalo Bob.*

MARK E. BLOCK: Are you aware of the nature of the litigation in which you are testifying today?

LAWNLIA GRANT: Yes, I am.

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Lecture 9: History and Family in *Henry IV*
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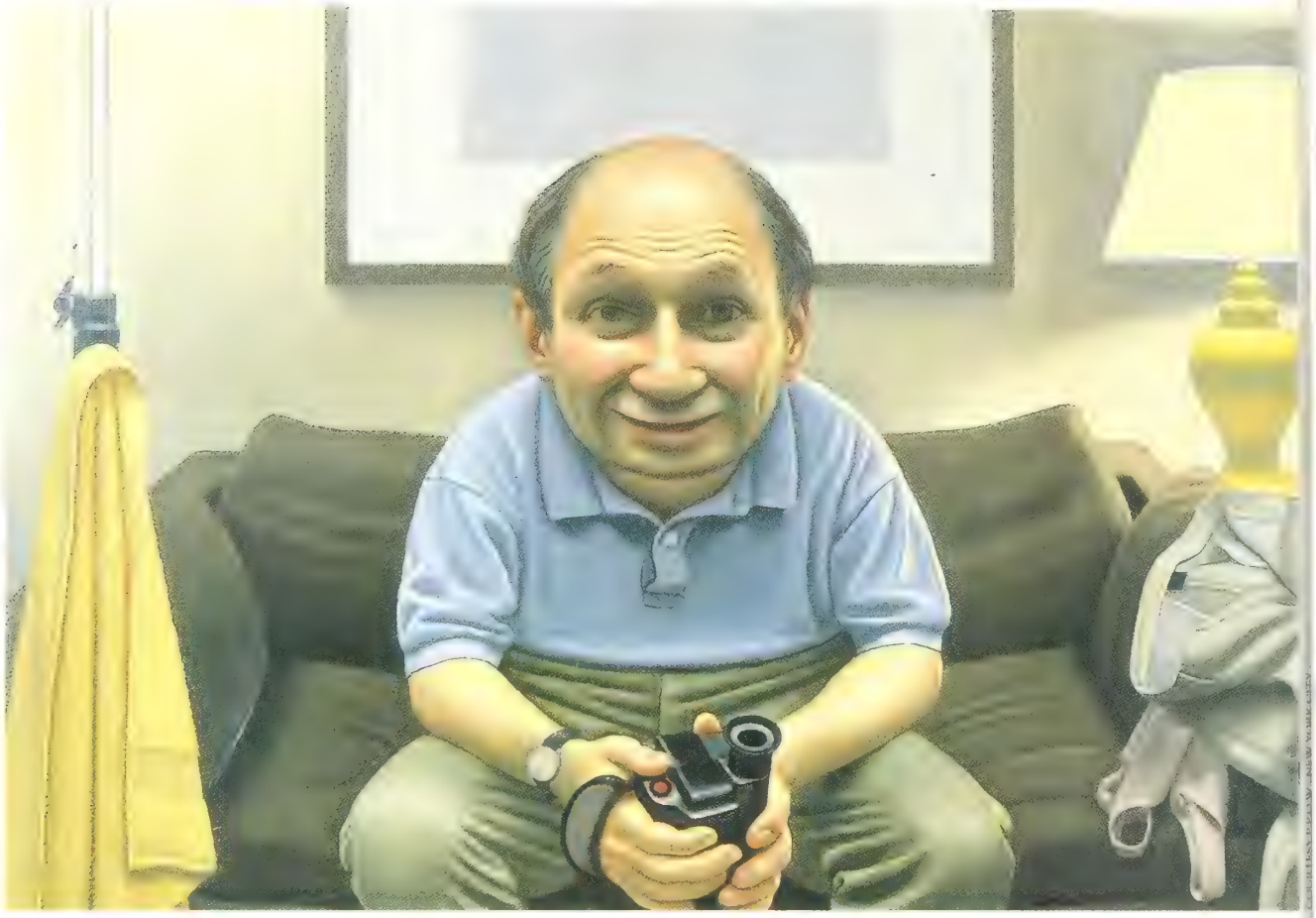
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The Amateur, *by Alexi Worth, whose work will be on display next month at the Elizabeth Harris Gallery, in New York City*

BLOCK: And would you explain for the your understanding of the nature of this litigation?

GRANT: I would say that it is a custody battle over the ownership of the Howdy Doody puppet.

BLOCK: Now, Miss Grant, for the purposes of this deposition, we'll be referring to Howdy Doody and the Howdy Doody puppet. For the sake of clarity, when I'm referring to Howdy Doody or the Howdy Doody puppet, I will be referring to the puppet or puppets that are referenced in the documents in Exhibits 2 and 3, if you want to look at those.

JAMES M. LICHTMAN: I'm going to have to object on the record to that definition of Howdy Doody. I think Exhibits 2 and 3 are ambiguous about which Howdy Doody they are referring to. I'm aware that there are a number of different Howdy Doodys that are potentially at issue in this case. And that only one in particular, or maybe more, if I'm mistaken about that, but one in particular is the subject of a lawsuit. I would ask that you clarify more precisely what you mean by Howdy Doody so that we can be sure there is a clear record and that you and Miss Grant are talking about the same thing when you refer to Howdy Doody.

There are a number of Howdy Doodys. And I don't purport to be an expert on the Howdy Doodys. My understanding is there are about five or six puppets that were actually used in the original show. These included the original Howdy Doody, which is what I think is at issue here, that had some sort of material inside its head that identifies it as the original. There are also copies that were made in order for public appearances to be possible. There are a number of Howdy Doodys.

FRANK J. LIBERTY: You're missing the point. The point is we're referring to all of them. Because we cannot pinpoint the original.

LICHTMAN: So is it my understanding that you're talking about all of the puppets, any puppets that might have been used in the original *Howdy Doody Show*?

LIBERTY: No. Howdy Doody. Not Photo Doody,

not Double Doody, not Mr. Bluster, not Dilly Dally, not anybody else. The Howdy Doodys that would be referenced in these letters, Exhibits 2 and 3, however many there are of them.

[SCHEMAY]: Forgive my ignorance. But is it then your position that the Howdy Doody as referenced in Exhibit 2 and Exhibit 3 could not possibly include Photo Doody or Double Doody or any of those puppets that were copies of the image of Howdy Doody?

BLOCK: Maybe the way to proceed, rather than having counsel argue over which Howdy Doody we're talking about, is to let the witness testify as to NBC's position, and then we can see if that somehow clarifies this issue.

Now, as of June 3, 1966, Miss Grant, can you tell me on behalf of NBC who was the owner of the original Howdy Doody puppet?

GRANT: I am concluding from this letter dated June 3, 1966, that at the time we still owned the puppets.

BLOCK: Did there come a time after June 3, 1966, when Rufus Rose became the owner of the original Howdy Doody puppet?

GRANT: My understanding is that once the settlement was concluded between NBC and Mr. Rose in 1967, the ownership of all of the puppets passed to Mr. Rose with the exception of Howdy Doody, which he could not dispose of. And at that point in time it is my understanding that there was some discussion about placing Howdy Doody with the Detroit Institute of Arts or in the Puppet Museum.

BLOCK: Now when you say except for the original Howdy Doody, from where do you get the information concerning the statement that all the puppets passed through Rose except for the original Howdy Doody?

GRANT: The letter of March 20, 1967, states that "Mr. Muir [the show's producer] and yourself will arrange for the disposition of the various Howdy Doody puppets (except for 'Howdy Doody,' of course)." And I take that reference to Howdy Doody to mean at minimum the original Howdy Doody, and at best all Howdy Doodys. Or anything that looks like Howdy Doody.

BLOCK: Is it fair to say that NBC's position in this matter is gleaned exclusively from the documents that have been reviewed?

GRANT: Yes. May I amend that as well?

BLOCK: You may amend that.

GRANT: I have also gleaned information from various conversations with the few parties that I could find that were around at the time, such as Roger Muir and, I believe, Mr. Burt Dubrow. And those two are the on

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

television program?

GRANT: That, amongst the theme park that I should have mentioned, the celebration that I should do, amongst the fact that Howdy should be on video. Amongst numerous others, sir. Hence, that's why I'm the Howdy Doody expert.

[EXCERPT]

MONDAY NIGHT FOOTNOTES

From "Dennis Miller Live," a comedy show [illegible] that provides real-time translations of Dennis Miller's Monday Night Football *commentary to [illegible]*

Jaguars v. Titans, 4th quarter

[illegible] "Hackel" [illegible] embowelment practiced by the Japanese samurai or formerly decreed by a court in lieu of the death penalty.

[illegible]

DENNIS SAID: "I fell into some cosmic wormhole last night. I was [illegible] live."

DENNIS HERE: A cosmic wormhole is a theoretical [illegible] Coal's [illegible] 1984 Olympic [illegible] them.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Jaguars v. Titans, 3rd quarter

DENNIS SAID: "Cool graphic, guys. Who do we got there in the animation, Ralph Bakshi?"

DEMYSTIFIED: Ralph Bakshi was a cult-hero animator who in the 1970s was cheered and jeered as the "X-rated Disney" for his wildly subversive films *Fritz the Cat* and *Heavy Traffic*. Since burnout pushed him to close his Hollywood studio more than a decade ago, the Brooklyn native has only occasionally returned to the medium, most recently to direct the coolly received 1992 feature film *Cool World*.

Jaguars v. Colts, 1st quarter

DENNIS SAID: "The triplets were all working together. You don't get to be that great without putting in a lot of BTUs."

DEMYSTIFIED: Miller refers to the Colts' triumvirate of fine young skill players (Edgerrin James, Peyton Manning, and Marvin Harrison) and British thermal units, a way to measure heat.

Bucaneers v. Vikings, 3rd quarter

DENNIS SAID: "And somewhere on Long Island 'Le Grand Ahi' churgles in his Barcalounger."

DEMYSTIFIED: Referring to retired coach Bill Parcells, a.k.a. "The Big Tuna," Miller mixes Japanese and French.

Seahawks v. Chiefs, 1st quarter

DENNIS SAID: ". . . air-dropped in like Red Adair."

DEMYSTIFIED: Miller refers to legendary fireman Paul N. "Red" Adair, who gained international celebrity for putting out the oil fires of Kuwait after the Gulf War. Referred to as "the best in the business" in oil-wildfire control.

Bucaneers v. Vikings, 4th quarter

DENNIS SAID: "I think Warren is telling him that Sapp is farther up the tree than Moss."

DEMYSTIFIED: After seeing Warren Sapp jaw at Randy Moss, Miller refers to the fact that "sap" is found farther up a tree than "moss." Sap rises from the root of the plant and must be extracted from plant tissues. Mosses grow on soil, rocks, and the bark of trees.

[Vocabulary]

BERLITZ FOR THE BROTHEL

From "Making Money in Berlin," a guide for foreign prostitutes working in Germany issued by Hydra, a support group for prostitutes.

Guten Abend.	Good evening.
Ich bin geil.	I'm horny/randy.
Du bist geil.	You're horny/randy.
Das kostet . . .	That costs . . .
halbe Stunde	half an hour
Freier/Gast/Kund	john/guest/customer
Französisch	blow job
Ich mache . . .	I do . . .
anal	anal
Das mache ich nicht.	I don't do that.
Sadomasochismus	sadomasochism
Mach es dir bequem!	Make yourself at home!
Ich mag das nicht.	I don't like that.
sich waschen	to wash oneself
Tittenfick	tit fuck
Gleitgel	lubricating jelly
Dreier	double
Ich küsse nicht.	I don't kiss.
lecken	to lick
Ich komme!	I'm coming!
kuscheln	to snuggle
Taschentuch	hanky/tissue
Auf Wiedersehen!	Goodbye!
Tschüß	Bye now
Bis bald!	See you soon!
Ich wünsche einen schönen Abend.	I hope you have a nice evening.
Ich möchte einen Anwalt anrufen.	I want to call a lawyer.
Ich mache keine Aussage, da ich mich unter Umständen bei wahrheitsgemäßen Angaben selbst belasten könnte.	I refuse to make a statement, since I might incriminate myself with true information.

[Essay]

NARROW RULED

From an essay by Nicholson Baker in the Autumn 2000 issue of The American Scholar. *Baker's forthcoming book,* Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper, *will be published this spring by Random House.*

When I come across something I really like in a book, I put a little dot in the margin. Not a check, not a double line—these would

Number of people who have [illegible]: 500

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The Harper's Index Book is funny (Miles of doodles produced by the average sixth grader during the school year: 13) . . . illuminating (Ratio of the number of Frank Sinatra's gold records to those of Kiss: 1:1) . . . sobering (Chance that a child born in New York City in 1996 will be living in poverty: 1 in 2) . . . stunning (Rank of Aries among the astrological signs of people most likely to be in an automobile accident: 1) . . . and, often, simply curious (Ratio of April showers to plants that produced May flowers at the Springfield, Illinois, Park District in 1999: 1:1,571).

Edited by Lewis H. Lapham and senior editor Charis Conn, with an introduction by George Plimpton, this edition of *The Harper's Index Book* is historic, for it is published in the sesquicentennial of *Harper's Magazine*, the oldest continuously published American magazine.

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Two paintings by Janet Fish, each titled Tape, *by Nancy L. Campo, which would be shown this summer at the Clifford Smith Gallery, in Boston*

be pedantic—but a single, nearly invisible tap of my pencil point that could almost be a dark fleck in the paper. In fact, sometimes as I've flipped through a book that I've read closely years before, my eye has been caught by an actual paper blemish that I have taken to be one of my own dots of approval, and I've stopped to read slowly through some undistinguished passage, prepared for beauty, and then, suspicious, I bring the page close to my eye and inspect the dot and find that I was fooled.

It's best not to make too many dots—no more than, say, ten or fifteen in a single book. Compared with underlining, or highlighting in yellow or pink, the dot method is unobtrusive—that's one of its great advantages. I can reread a book that I have dotted here and there, and yet not be too distracted by the record of my earlier discoveries. And I can feel secure in the knowledge that if others idly open my books, they won't be able to see at a glance what interested me—they won't say to themselves, He thought *that* was good!

But my method is not only to mark the passages I like. I also write the numbers of the marked pages in the back. Then—and this is the most important part—at some later date, sometimes years later, I refer to the page numbers, locate the dots, and copy in a spiral bound notebook the passages that have awaited my return. About fifteen years ago I started to tally behind—I have dozens, probably hundreds, of books with a column of page numbers written on the endpapers whose appealing sentences or paragraphs I have not yet transcribed. Sometimes many months will go by without my adding anything to my copybook. But it is almost the only handwriting I do now, aside from writing checks, and whenever I take up the studious pen and begin, it makes me a happier person: my own bristling brain-urchins of worry melt in the strong solvent of other people's grammar.

My first notebook dates from 1982, when I was twenty-five. On page 2 is a sentence from Boswell's *Life of Johnson*: "I passed many hours with him, of which I find all in my memorial is, 'much laughing.'" Back then, I did a lot of the copying on lunch hours in Boston, and on weekends at a dark restaurant near Park Street Station called the Mug 'n Muffin, where I ordered a coffee and a blueberry muffin, which would arrive sizzling, after two full minutes in the industrial microwave, too hot to remove from its fluted wrapper, and which then, as I obliviously transcribed, would slowly turn to stone. At nearby tables, Bible students from Park Street Church would have long, hoarse conversations about God's love, shaking their heads over His mercy as they stubbed out their cigarettes. Every few months at the Mug 'n Muffin there was a rich, almost chocolaty smell of some comprehensive insecticide. It was the perfect place for longhand.

I've filled seven notebooks since then—not

many, I admit, but they loom large. They are all spiral-bound: the spiral is itself inspirational, a bit of chromium cursiveness worming through and uniting otherwise easily scattered pages, just as handwritten script links together what is, on the book's page, an un-umbilicaled sequence of discrete letters. Over the years, I have stepped on some of the notebooks by mistake, so that their pages turn less freely than they once did: it is as difficult to restore a bent spiral binding as it is to repair an overstressed Slinky. In 1983, contact-lens solution leaked through the pages of one notebook in my briefcase, obliterating parts of passages from Bacon, Anthony Powell, Darwin, Johnson, and F. Scott Fitzgerald, as well as the word "Memory" in a sentence from Martin F. Tupper's *Proverbial Philosophy* (1838) that I had found reading the *OED*'s entry on "rote": "Memory is not wisdom: idiots can rote volumes." Still, despite these injuries, the page turning, and the reading, continues to be extremely satisfying.

As a rule I transcribe the work of people who wrote a long time ago. It is a way of momentarily reanimating them, slowly unwinding their sentential shrouds; it is the only sure way to sense their idiosyncrasies. Sometimes I whisper the words while I copy them. On December 5, 1994, I copied something from Richard Porson (1759–1808), a classical scholar who could recite much of Smollett's *Roderick Random* by heart, but who drank too much and wrecked his life. "Anyone might become as good a critic as I am," Porson says, "if he would only take the trouble to make himself so. I have made myself what I am by intense labor; sometimes in order to impress a thing on my memory I have read it a dozen times and transcribed it six." I was struck by this before I copied it over, but only by copying it over did I notice the unobtrusive poise of "make himself so." Porson spent years in poverty; from him I also transcribed this sentence: "I used often to lie awake through the whole night, and wish for a large pearl."

My notebooks are seven and three-quarter inches tall and five inches wide; they originally contained eighty sheets. (I've torn out pages in the backs of some of them.) They are all "narrow ruled." The first one has a postcard from the National Gallery of Bellini's Saint Jerome taped to the cover—I wanted to cover up the words "university notebook" printed in eighties moderno-lowercase type. Bellini's Jerome is an old man in knotted rags reading a big red book in front of a superb thesaurus of rock formations. A lion sleeps nearby. A more recent copybook bears a postcard of Albrecht Dürer's Saint Jerome—the light through the bottle-glass windows in Dürer's interpretation of Jerome's study casts rows of shadows on the wall that resemble [illegible] cells, or softly spiraled cinnamon rolls arranged on trays, and there is a lordly gourd or squash presiding from an eyelet in a roof beam. The [illegible] nothing to entwine; they exult in their midair inflections and self-induced spiral bindings. My Dürer-decorated notebook begins with a vocabulary word, *phlyctenule*, that I found reading Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary: a phlyctenule, for those who may be curious, is a small pustule on the cornea. I was interested in the disgusted "flick" that begins it, interested that it included its own revulsion; words with exotically unknowable foreign roots sometimes survive because we hear ordinary meanings in them.

On January 15, 1988, and then again on June 7, 1994 (forgetting that I'd already done it once), I transcribed George Saintsbury's judgment of a certain work of Erasmus. It comes from a posthumous collection of Saintsbury entitled *A Last Vintage*:

> Perhaps the best thing in it is the [illegible] on the title-page, which [illegible] for it, that, all [illegible]. With [illegible] like learning [illegible] and wit, and [illegible] which is better still as matter? Certainly [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] and

Manning, some Iris Murdoch, some Dryden, some Updike, some Philip Sidney. Here's a sample Olivia Manning passage, from *The Great Fortune*:

> He had been served with a rich goose-liver paté, dark with truffles and dressed with clarified butter. Inchcape swallowed this down in chunks, talking through it as though it were a flavourless impediment to self-expression.

Here's another Manning extract, from *The Spoilt City*:

> Yakimov, discomforted by a sense of lost advantage, stared into his empty glass for some moments before it occurred to him that he had in his possession the means of re-establishing interest in himself. He drew from his hip pocket the plan he had found in Guy's desk. "Got something here," he said. "Give you an idea . . . not supposed to flash it about, but between old friends."
>
> He handed the paper to Freddi, who took it smiling, looked at it and ceased to smile.

In copying these over (in 1985) I was forced to take stock of every hyphen, every observational glance. I became Olivia Manning's flunky, her amanuensis, her temp-worker, in effect saying to her, for however long it took to thread her words on the page, Where you go, I follow. Such labor is usefully humbling, because it delivers you back into the third grade, when you copied things off the board and had to pay attention to the little boat shape in the last stroke of the cursive capital *B*, but it isn't mechanical or fancy-cramping, because the transcriber's mind can think its own pin-striped thoughts on the sly, between times.

And, just as helpfully, every appealing high point that you read with transient delight can become, through commonplacing, merely average: it is no longer the jewel it was when you pried it from the dried salt marsh of its page, but has now itself been reduced to the primordial matter out of which only your own writing can lift and deliver you—you become, even textually, Sir Thomas Browne's Amphibian, "compelled to live in . . . divided and distinguished worlds"—between the belly-squirming world of sedulous apprenticeship and the nakedly leaping bipedal world of self-expression. Thus Bach copied out Buxtehude's and Vivaldi's music to learn its secrets, staying up late in his brother's latticed music library even though forbidden to do so; thus Wallace Stevens copied out in his commonplace book (titled *Sur Plusieurs Beaux Sujects*) what D. J. Bach had to say about Schoenberg; thus E. M. Forster in middle age copied out Tennyson and Macaulay; and thus Gibbon copied over Pascal and Giannone's *History of Naples*:

> This various reading, which I now conducted with discretion, was digested, according to the precept and model of Mr. Locke, into a large commonplace-book; a practice, however, which I do not strenuously recommend. The action of the pen will doubtless imprint an idea on the mind as well as the paper; but I much question whether the benefits of this laborious method are adequate to the waste of time; and I must agree with Dr. Johnson (Idler, No. 74), 'that what is twice read is commonly better remembered than what is transcribed.'

Here Gibbon isn't fair to the efficacy of his self-tutelage. I wonder whether he could have formed his style—that unique window display of teacups and sarcophagi—without having felt his way, word by word, at the artificially impeded speed of handwriting, through some of the poetry of Gray and Pope, for instance. Probably he remembered Johnson's "Idler" essay because he had once been moved to commonplace it himself.

"To commonplace"—is it really a legal verb? Samuel Johnson believed it was:

> Commonplace-book. A book in which things to be remembered are ranged under general heads. I turned to my *commonplace-book*, and found his case under the word *coquette*. *Tatler*
>
> To Commonplace. To reduce to general heads. I do not apprehend any difficulty in collecting and *commonplacing* an universal history from the whole body of historians. *Felton*

"Felton" turns out to be one Henry Felton, D.D., who in *A Dissertation on Reading the Classics* (1710) wasn't sure that the activity of reducing to general heads was always beneficial:

> *Common-Placing* the *Sense* of an Author, is such a stupid Undertaking, that, if I may be indulged in saying it, they *want common Sense* that practise it. What Heaps of this Rubbish have I seen! O the Pains and Labour to record what other People have said, that is taken by those, who have nothing to say themselves! . . . When I see a beautiful Building of exact Order and Proportion, taken down, and the different Materials laid together by themselves, it putteth me in mind of these *Common-Place Men*.

Felton may be right—you don't want to take it too far. Charles Reade, the nineteenth-century novelist, had so many commonplace books that "they completely filled one of the rooms in his house," according to Richard Le Gallienne. He devoted one full day out of each week to "cataloguing the notes of his multifarious reading." Still, it worked for him. The big risk, if you accumulate a lot of chirographic bits and pieces, is that you will be tempted to quote more of them than you

should. In a review of a book called *The Progress of the Intellect*, George Eliot criticized the author (Robert William Mackay) for writing pages that "read like extracts from his common-place book, which must be, as Southey said of his own, an urn under the arm of a river-god, rather than like a digested result of study, intended to inform the general reader." Don't feel you must recirculate everything that you have found (so I tell myself); a recopied passage will earn its keep even if you never quote it anywhere.

There is good to be gained in signing someone else's mind-signature, in scribbling in tongues: the retracing of a series of long-lost authorial motions with your own present pen, if you do it in the proper spirit, out of a desire to stay delight's presence rather than out of autodidactic obligation, or even if you begin reluctantly, dutifully, troubled by feelings of self-pelf in the face of so many pressing university-press editions, can calm and steady your state, not to mention improve it, for while the transcribing may appear to be a form of close and exclusive concentration, it has an equally important element of peaceable meditative mindlessness as well, like playing with a paper clip. Reading is fast, but handwriting is slow it retards thought's due process, it consumes irreplaceable scupperfuls of time, it pushes every competing utterance away—and that is its great virtue, in fact, over mere underlining, and even over an efficient laptop retyping of the passage: for in those secret interclausal tracts of cleared thought-space, in the extended dreaming blanks of fair-copying between the instant it took the eye to comprehend a writer's phrase and the seeming eternity it then takes the hedgehog hand to negotiate that phrase again in legible, physical loops on the notebook page (especially on the verso side of the page, when the spiral binding interferes annoyingly with the muscle of the little finger), during which all of your purplest hopes are compelled to idle, and you must pay attention to some common rhetorical turn that you had never until then deigned to think about, at the same time your constrained prose-aptitude is stimulated to higher rates of metabolism by what Johnson called "the contagion of diligence" and through its temporary forced conformity with another person's exhaust-system of expression—in this state of rubber burning, clutch smoking, full servience, new quiet racemes will emerge from among the paving stones and foam greenly up in places they would never otherwise have prospered.

Just don't do it too much—and always use quotation marks.

OPEN FACE

Story, *DeLillo's twelfth novel,* The Body Artist

WOMAN: I was thinking how strange it is.

WOMAN: That people are able to live together. Days and nights and years. Five years go by. How do they do it? Ten, eleven, twelve years. Two people making one life. Sharing ten thousand meals. Talking to each other face to face, open face, like hot sandwiches. All the words that fill the house. What do people say over a lifetime? Trapped in each other's syntax. The same voice. The droning tonal repetition. I'll tell you something

MAN: You'll tell me something.

WOMAN: There's a mystery here. The people behind the walls of the brown house next door. What do they say and how do they survive it. All that idle dialogue. He runs late. He hates it. I was thinking how strange it is. How do they do it, night after night, all those nights, those words, those few who do it and survive?

MAN: They make love. They make salads.

WOMAN: But sooner or later they have to speak. I mean what shatters the world. I mean isn't it gradually shattering to sit and listen to the same person all the time, without reason or rhyme. Words that trail away. The pauses. The clauses. How many thousands of times can you look at the same drained face and watch the mouth begin to open? Everything's been fine up to now. It is when they open their mouths. It is when they speak.

MAN: I'm still not over this cold of mine

WOMAN: Take those things you take.

MAN: The tablets.

WOMAN: The caplets

MAN: Long day.

WOMAN: Long day.

MAN: A good night's sleep.

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The Countess of Stanlein Restored

Sound and soundness in a Stradivarius violoncello

By Nicholas Delbanco

On September 22, 1998, the cellist Bernard Greenhouse drove from his home in Massachusetts the five hours to Manhattan. On the car's rear seat reposed his prized possession, named in honor of two of its previous owners: the Countess of Stanlein, ex. Paganini Stradivarius violoncello of 1707. Strapped down and secure in its carrying case, the instrument traveled wherever Greenhouse went, and it had done so for years. This afternoon, however, he was planning to realize a long-deferred dream and deposit the "Strad" in New York.

It did require work. There were nicks and scratches scattered on the surface, front and back. The varnish had darkened in spots; in others the varnish had thinned. Some previous patches needed retouching; in places the edging had cracked. The glue by the sound post—an old repair—leaked. Decades of pressure on the neck, and from the downward force of the bridge feet beneath the taut-stretched strings, had forced the f-holes into less than perfect symmetry; the ribs would need to be adjusted and the front plate aligned.

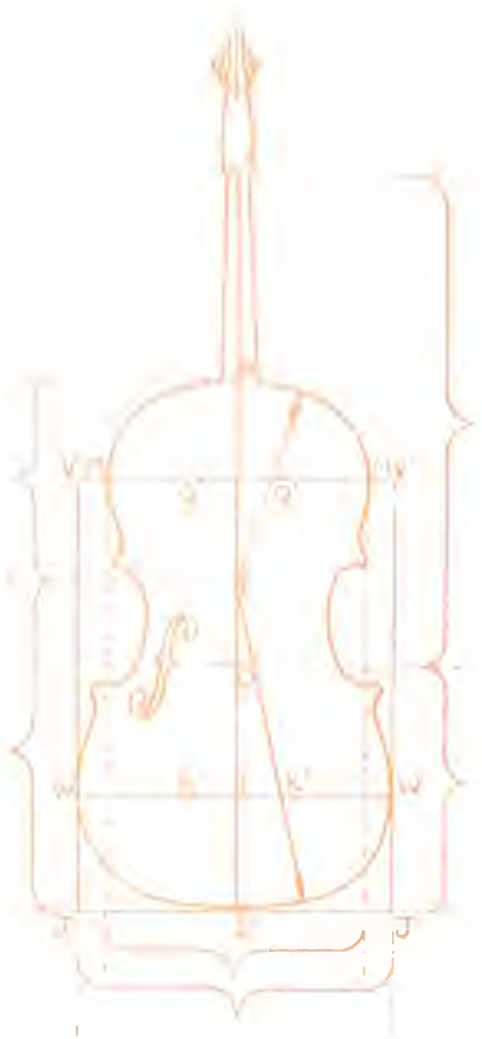
Not all of this was visible, and only the discerning eye would notice or, noticing, object. The instrument had long been famous for both its beauty and its tone. But Greenhouse is a perfectionist, and previous repairs had been stopgap and partial, in the service of utility. At the height [illegible] Group, as a founding member of the Beaux Arts [illegible] hundred times per year. From continent to continent, in all sorts of weather and playing conditions, the Countess of Stanlein had been his companion; he had carried her on boats and planes, in rented cars and taxicabs and trains, and always in a rush.

[illegible] longer appearing rou[illegible] owned several other instruments to practice on at home. At eighty-two, the cellist had the money and unscheduled time and the desire to "give back," as he put it, "something of value" to the world of music that had given him so much. This was to be, he reasoned, both a good deed and an investment. He knew just the man to do the job—René Morel, on West Fifty-fourth Street—and the work had been agreed upon and delivery date arranged.

Greenhouse had been a student of the late

Pablo Casals. After the Second World War he traveled to Prades, in the French Pyrenees, where the Catalan cellist lived in retirement. As a protest against Generalísimo Franco, Casals accepted no public engagements but continued to practice assiduously; there, in the church of Saint-Michel de Cuxa, he recorded the six Unaccompanied Suites for Violoncello by Johann Sebastian Bach. There too, in 1946, he took on the young American as, in effect, an apprentice. More than a half century later, that audition stays vivid for Greenhouse:

"I [started] playing in the upper room, and he requested many pieces. After an hour or more of my playing—during which he [walked] nothing more than the piece and the passage he wanted me to play—he said, 'All right. Put down your cello, put it away, and we'll talk.' He said to me, 'Well, what you need is an apprenticeship to a great artist. I believe in the apprentice system. Stradivari, Guarneri, Amati: they turned out so many wonderful violin makers. And I believe the same thing can hold true in making musicians. If I knew of a great artist I could send you to, I would do so,' he said, 'because my mind is very much occupied with the Spanish Republican cause. But since I don't know whom to send you to—and if you agree to stay in the village and take a lesson at least once every two days—I will teach you.'"



Such a system of tutelage remains in place today: implicit in the idea of "master classes" and explicit in the trade of the luthier. This is a generic term for those who make and repair bowed stringed instruments, and the enterprise feels nearly medieval in its hierarchy of apprentice, journeyman laborer, master craftsman. Young men still clean the varnish rags or sweep wood shavings from the floor as did their predecessors centuries ago, and under much the same close, watchful supervision. Bernard Greenhouse met René Morel in the early 1950s, when the luthier was working for the legendary Fernando Sacconi in the New York shop of Rembert Wurlitzer; he commended the Frenchman thereafter to the dealer Jacques Français. In 1994, Morel struck out on his own, both as dealer and restorer. His long and narrow workroom is chockablock with wood and tools and objects in molds and clamps; benches; his public rooms display memorabilia—signed concert posters and photographs of virtuosi—from the storied past.

What this luthier sells are violins and violas and cellos and bows of value and importance, and what he repairs is the crème de la crème. There are workaday instruments also, of course; nearly a thousand pass through the shop each year for sale or repair. A dealer's reputation, however, rests on the highest common denominator of stock, and to have handled the Countess of Stanlein is no small professional thing. Greenhouse and Morel admire each other cordially; they trust each other a little, and when the cellist delivered his instrument for the purpose of "restoration" he left with a two- by three-inch numbered ticket as receipt.

The human animal makes lists. Instinctively we scan the charts for those who come first, second, last. We like to know the names of the ten best- or worst-dressed celebrities, the all-time all-star baseball team, the richest men or women and the twelve safest cities for family life and the millennium's five or five hundred most important citizens. We rank colleges and wines. In our obsessive calibration of achievement by degrees, there are tables and annotated lists of lists; it sometimes seems as though the need to establish a "top dog" or a "leader of the pack" stays programmed in the species. Hierarchy has its comforts, after all we want to know where we belong and, by extrapolation, where we stand.

Lutherie by Kevin Coates (1985) by permission of Oxford University Press

Such ranking in terms of artistic achievement is a thankless task. We may have heavyweight champions of the world and world leaders in automobile or oil production, but enter the domain of art and any assessment of primacy falls flat. Pick the "greatest" of composers and for every proponent of Bach there will be a Beethoven butt; urge Mozart as the supreme musical consciousness and you'll find an adept of Stravinsky and one of Schubert or Schumann and one of Paul Simon or Sting. Pick the "greatest" of visual artists and there will be votes cast in that beauty contest for Raphael and Rembrandt and Da Vinci and Dürer and Grandma Moses and Andy Warhol and Monet. Even Shakespeare has detractors: those who would [illegible] couldn't be Shakespeare or prefer Milton instead. The marketplace requires multiplicity, and to insist that X outranks Y is to reveal mere personal preference or a set of cultural blinders; a declension of the "hundred best" books or "all-time favorite" love songs seems, on the face of it, inane.

For there can be no argument—no instructive disagreement—as to taste. *De gustibus non est disputandum* is a dictum accepted by all. Yet ask a hundred people to name the greatest of instrument makers, and ninety-five will agree. One name is [illegible] challenge his reputation do so as iconoclasts. If you have heard of anyone you will have heard of Stradivari, and to propose Guadagnini or Gofriller or members of the Amati family as the most accomplished of luthiers is to cast a minority vote. (Guarneri "del Gesù" has his consequential advocates, and there are cognoscenti who prize his violins and violas above all others, but he died young and worked at speed and built, it would seem, only one cello.) I know of no artist or craftsman more universally honored than is Stradivari; his bowed, wooden, stringed instruments have long been celebrated as the Platonic ideal of the form.

Antonio Stradivari was born in or near Cremona, Italy, in 1644. The actual date and place of his birth have been lost, but various Stradivaris had prospered in Cremona for centuries before. (The Latin and Italian spelling of his patronymic—Stradivarius and Stradivari—are interchangeable; by convention the former refers to an instrument, the latter to its maker, but this is a distinction long since blurred. Indeed, the proper orthography was "Stradiuarius" until in the 1730s the luthier himself replaced the "u" with a Roman "v." One of his violin-making sons retained it; another returned to the "u.") Ottolinus Stradivari had been a *senator patriae* as early as 1127, in 1186 there was a senator Stradivari; the lawyer Guglielmus Stradivari [illegible] and those who could afford to do so moved to the [illegible] keeping was in any case at risk.

We know a good deal about the instrument [illegible] Cremonese vernacular, and it referred not to master craftsman lived long and was proud of longevity. [illegible] "Muntz" Stradivarius with a label in his own [illegible] first such label, in which he describes himself as a pupil of Amati, was signed in 1666.) So our knowledge of the birth date is in effect retrospective, a matter of subtraction, and whether he was born in Cremona or Brescia or Bergamo remains, as of this writing, moot.

He worked till the day of his death, and that [illegible] *until the moment he expired. I, D[illegible] Priest of this Church of S. Matteo,*

We think that we know what he looked like: tall, dark, fine-fingered—though there's no authenticated likeness; we're told that he wore a white cap routinely and a white leather apron at work. We believe that he was pious, self-effacing, not litigious. These last qualities, however, are more a function of evidence absent than present: [illegible] conspicuous citizen to have [illegible] Lately his testament has been unearthed, and we [illegible]

li—then the names of his several children, their birth dates, and which of them grew up.

We deduce, from the signed label ("*Antonius Stradiuarius Cremonenfis, Alumnus Nicolaii Amati, Faciebat Anno 1666*"), that he was apprenticed to Nicolò Amati. We assume that he lived, as well as plied his trade, at Piazza Roma, No. 1. He probably hung his instruments to dry in the attic of this building, but the structure no longer exists. As is the case with Shakespeare, the provincial place that harbored him appeared at first indifferent: his bones were removed from the crypt of the church when the church itself was razed; his workshop, too, was leveled and his tools and patterns dispersed. Now Cremona celebrates its honored resident and ancient cottage industry with a museum of the violin, a festival devoted to violin making, and a tourism boom.

René Morel's hair is white and curly, his figure trim in a blue smock, and he rolls back his shirtsleeves meticulously and sports a close-barbered mustache. In his late sixties, Gallic and dapper, the luthier maintains his eleventh-floor workshop in New York's theater district. Outside the locked glass door of his studio young dancers and singers and actors rehearse, and he eyes them where they cluster in the hall. "Those girls are wearing dental floss, not even a G-string," he says. "*Ces jeunes gens là*," he says, "they entertain me with their dream of entertainment; they have not the slightest idea how hard one has to work."

He himself, he says, works very hard; his father and grandfather made instruments, and he has been elected president of the Entente Internationale des Maîtres Luthiers et Archetiers d'Art—violin and bow makers. His assistants call him *Maître*, and he reports with pride that long ago Pablo Casals called him *Maître* Morel. He had been taken to the hotel where the famed artist was staying, then introduced as the young man who would "save" the cello Casals was to perform on that night. "And Sasha [Alexander Schneider] says, 'He's young but you'll see what he can do for you.' So Casals comes up, and Martita, his wife, was with him. I turned red, yellow, and he called me *Maître* Morel. I was looking for a mousehole to hide in, I shook, I was very much in awe, and I said, 'Oh, Maestro Casals, if you call me *Maître* then how may I address you?' 'You must call me Pablo,' he says."

In Morel's own atelier—its proper name is Morel & Gradoux-Matt Inc., since a Swiss luthier is his partner—dozens of instruments wait for repair. They range from the amateur's hand-me-down "cigar-box" to the professional's ideal of excellence. In the former case he lets his assistants do the work, murmuring "*bien*" if he approves or pointing out what needs to be redone. In the latter instance—when the instrument is of particular interest or of particular value—he does the work himself. And restoration, it's worth repeating, differs from repair. Repair may be accomplished rapidly—a small adjustment of bridge or sound post in time for a concert, a brief application of glue and a clamp. But what he and Greenhouse contracted to do, within the limits of the possible, was full-fledged restoration, and this must be done with the instrument open, requiring patience and skill.

"When I was young," says Morel, "I could work twelve, fifteen hours at a time and never once be tired; my eyes were better then. But when you deal with restoration it cannot be hurried, it must not be rushed. To start with, we take it apart. Even such a fine lady as the Countess of Stanlein must be opened for examination. You insert the knife carefully, carefully, just here into the glue—you must know how to do it—and then you just go *pop!*"

What are the components of this resonating box; what kind of wood is it made of and in what proportion? If this truly represents the Platonic ideal of the form of a violoncello, then how may we best measure it and who established its shape? Here's a skeletal description of the instrument's anatomy:

The *top* (alternately called the *table*, *front plate* or *belly*) is by tradition made of two pieces of matching spruce or pine glued together. Two f-holes—so called because of their shape—are carved on the top of the instrument on each side; these are the apertures through which the sound of the vibrating plates is produced. The inside of the top is graded from 3/16 inches in the middle to 9/64 inches at the edges, for a cello with a body length of 29 1/2 inches.

The *back* is usually made of two matching pieces of maple—a harder wood than spruce or pine—selected for the figuration in and pattern of the wood. The back itself is graded from 4/16 inches at the center to 9/64 inches at each edge. (Stradivari did not work, of course, in inches but by convention in the English-speaking world these measurements are so registered.) A few cellos exist with one-piece backs. The *neck*, *peg box* and *scroll* were originally shaped from one piece of maple. The necks of older cellos were shorter than today's, but because of the rise in pitch over the centuries, new, longer necks have had to be attached. When this is done, the peg box and scroll, an ornamental gesture on the part of the luthier, are retained if possible and replaced on the new neck.

There are *sides*, or *ribs*—six pieces of maple glued to the top and the back; there's a strip of light-colored wood glued between two strips of black wood to form one tripartite strip. This is

illed *purfling*, and six of these strips fit into a oove near the edge of each plate for purposes of ecoration; too, they protect the plate's edge.

here's an elaborately carved piece of lightweight aple called a *bridge*; its feet are set—not glued—etween the f-holes, centered on the f-hole otches, and it supports the four strings.

Over time such functional ornaments as an *nd button*, a *nut*, and a *tailpiece* have become standard component parts of the instrument also; the *nd button* is a small, rounded piece of wood inserted into the end block with the cord of the tailpiece wrapped around it and a hole bored through the middle for a metal end pin. That end pin is adjustable, raising the instrument to its desired height and attaching to the floor. The carved, triangular *tailpiece* is intended to keep the strings taut. The *nut*, slightly higher than the fingerboard, is a small piece of ebony glued onto the neck with grooves for proper spacing of the strings.

Interior component parts include the *linings*, the *bass bar*, and the *sound post*. The *linings* comprise twelve narrow strips of pine glued to the edges of the sides in order to increase the surface to which the top and back will be glued. The *bass bar* must be cut to fit the curvature of the top, then glued to the inside of the top on the left-hand side—where the lowest of the four strings, the C-string, is positioned; therefore the bar is called "bass." The *sound post* is not glued but placed just in front of the bridge's right foot, with ends shaped exactly to fit the contours of the top and back of the instrument; it sends the vibration from plate to plate, and its adjustment is crucial to the sound produced.

The end purpose of all such arrangements is, of course, sonority. The issues of weight and volume and proportion have to do with both the quality and quantity of noise produced. Too heavy an instrument fails to respond; too light a one will sound tinny or thin. The relatively slender walls of a guitar, for instance, will necessarily yield a different kind of vibration than those of a cello; sound waves result from density as well as from the volume of air contained by the wood's carved shape.*

in-law; I have known him well by now for more than thirty years. known him to be separated from the instrument for more than a few weeks, when repair became imperative, and during that time—although playing a fine copy he had commissioned from the luthier Marten Cornelissen—he was restless. He admires the Cornelissen, as well as other instruments he owns (in particular a Contreras, Stradivarius"), but the Countess of Stanlein is his heart's darling, his pearl among white peas.

As with many other performers, stories attach to the matter of attachment: how Greenhouse lost the cello once, in transit, on a plane to Paris and found it in Vienna on the airport tarmac; how he left it in a taxi in Dubrovnik, and spent a sleepless night because the cabbie, once identified, said he himself required sleep and would return the cello in the morning; how he braved a machine-gun-wielding customs inspector in South America who wanted to subject the instrument to a strip search. (When Yo-Yo Ma misplaced his Montagnana in a New York taxi's trunk last year it became a cause célèbre and its recov-

* *This description derives from Elizabeth Cowling's* The Cello *(Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1975)*

ery a cause for celebration. Now his recorded voice inside the cab offers passengers the "classical advice" to remember their belongings.)

In the early days of airplane travel the Countess of Stanlein could come along free; later a "companion" ticket would be issued at half price. ("How old is your son Cello, Mr. Greenhouse?" an official in Newark once asked.) Then, with the increase in airplane traffic and procedural regulations, the cello ticket became full fare—it cannot, of course, be stowed in the hold—and now the instrument must travel in isolated splendor, strapped into its own wide, padded seat in first class. The Russian soloist Raya Garbousova claimed to have avoided that expensive inconvenience by calling her cello a "bass balalaika"; since airplane regulations made no mention of that instrument, she carried her Strad at no cost.

All such association entails accommodation, and habit entails a resistance to change. Since this musician and his cello have been inseparable for decades, performer and instrument fuse. Less a romantic vagary than a statement of fact, such a process is familiar to any practiced player; the idiosyncrasies of an instrument, perplexing to "A," have become second nature to "B." And Morel knows how Greenhouse reacts:

"He was so fixed on the bridge Maestro Sacconi had cut for him that he wouldn't let it be moved. You ask him if I'm lying. It's probably been the[re] now for thirty years, and we spent fifeen yea[rs] without moving the sound post either. Of all m[y] customers this is the one who has remained th[e] longest with the same material. But Bernie, whe[n] he was younger and I first heard him play, he an[d] his cello were one and one only. I always sa[y] there is no one in the world who could master tha[t] sound. It's his sound with the cello; you give tha[t] cello to anybody else and it won't sound the same. He has a way with the flesh of the finger, the v[i]brato of the hand—I was flabbergasted, and I sai[d] to myself, that's it, that's the complete sound [of] this instrument."

The luthier's task, therefore, is twofold: to re[-] store the physical object and not to alter the in[-] strument's sound. This is a delicate balancing ac[t] all the more so when musician and cello hav[e] been long-standing intimates. Unnumbered hou[rs] in rehearsal and performance make a millimeter['s] difference in the height of the bridge or the widt[h] of the neck loom large, and Greenhouse knows a[t] if by instinct how to produce his particular ton[e]. He and his instrument are—as More[l] says admiringly—"one."

The city of Cremona, capital of the Province of th[e] same name, is of great antiquity, having been founde[d] by the Romans in the year 218 B.C. . . . Whether or not Cremona is distinguished as the actual scen[e] of the emergence of the true violin by the hands [of] Andrea Amati, founder of the Cremona School, [or] whether that honor should belong to the neighbor[-] ing city of Brescia, where Gasparo da Salò also fash[-] ioned instruments of violin form in the sixteenth cen[-] tury, the significance of Cremona will ever remain [of] first magnitude in the story of the Violin.

So writes Ernest Doring in the impressively ti[-] tled: *How Many Strads? Our Heritage From th[e] Master; A* Tribute *to the Memory of a* Great Geniu[s] *compiled in the year marking the Tercentenary of hi[s] birth; being a Tabulation of Works Believed to Sur[-] vive Produced in Cremona by Antonio Stradivari Between 1666 and 1737, including relevant data an[d] mention of his two sons, Francesco and Omobono*.

To return to the matter of "first magnitude" and ranking, it's no small mystery that this sma[ll] town in the north of Italy should have provided the locus for so many of the world's importan[t] bowed wooden instruments. There are some who claim it was a function of the excellence of availa[-] able timber, much of it shipped across the Adri[-] atic; there are some who argue for the towns apothecary and the varnish he produced; there are others who attribute this "genius of place" to th[e] system of apprenticeship as such. Roughly be[-] tween the latitudes of 44 and 46 degrees, from west of Milan to Venice and Udine (though th[e] luthier David Tecchler lived in Rome, and th[e]

aglioni) only in Naples.

ear o ospered. Andrea and Nicolò Amati, Francesco
li m uggeri, Andrea Guarneri, were working in Cre-
l thin ona before Stradivari was born; Guarneri "del
chen esù," Carlo Bergonzi, Lorenzo Storioni, and G.
. Ceruti

nued after his death.

thai Most likely there is no single answer but a con-
thaf uence of answers to the question of why then and
amat here. The quality of wood and varnish, the na-
. . .
saiq etition would each have played a role. But what-
dk ver the reason or reasons, in the seventeenth and
ighteenth centuries a skill came to fruition in and
rer ear Cremona that has not been equaled since.
m. Although genius itself may be neither explicable
act or replicable, that part of the luthier's art which
nav an be called pure craftsmanship can be in part
ransmitted—rather like the guild of stonework-
rs, the Cosmati, who set the floors of churches
nd crypts with intricate inlaid geometrical pat-
sa erns, then watched their trade die off.

This trade, however, thrives. More people play
wo den stringed instruments more widely now
han ever before, and there's a flourishing business
n both construction and repair. The membership
directory of The American Federation of Violin
nd Bow Makers (1998–99) lists members from
Ames to Zygmuntowicz with offices from Ari-
zona to Wisconsin. René Morel's workshop in
Manhattan contains a polyglot transient or res-
ident crew; his assistants speak Japanese, French,
German, and Czech. Today the business is inter-
national not local, and performers cross borders
habitually
making world. Yet the young luthier still travels
to Cremona as a pilgrim to a holy place and, in
the museum where the master's tools and pat-
terns and drawings and instruments have been re-
assembled, still visits as though at a shrine.

For a few years the "Cremonese" were
eclipsed—at the turn of the nineteenth century,
German instruments outranked the Italians in
terms of
Jane Austen's phrase, "it is a truth universally
acknowledged, that a single" music lover "in pos-
session of a good fortune, must be in want of" an
instrument built in that time and place. And, if
he or she be very rich or skilled or fortunate
indeed, the instrument will likely

"This is not my biggest restoration," says
Morel. "I have done much more difficult work
than this, I have restored instruments that were
considered garbage—when I was in my thirties
there was no challenge I wouldn't take. When I
heard Maestro Greenhouse play, while I was still
at Wurlitzer, his sound always moved me; it
wasn't the largest sound, but whenever he touched

hands and lifts his arms and shoulders—"not the

jor challenges has to do with var-
nish- worn away since Stradivari's time and,
says, his predecessors took a housepainter's brush
denatured alcohol and a
small sable retouching brush. Very carefully he
three, or four strokes of the brush; he repeats this
gesture often enough to soften the surface of the

ake off all such recent coating requires,
self-evidently, that Morel can distinguish between
the varnish Stradivari used and that which has
tells me, "but also the feeling, the texture of the
lo's back is almost wholly original, and so is the col-
oration of the scroll. But the varnish of the top had
been much thickened and retouched, and when
I ask him pointing to an area of two square inch-
es by the f hole how long it will take to clean this
particular area to his own satisfaction, he says he

ro Greenhouse, but then he
says, no, you must call me by the name my friends

and concentration."

the light. The room is narrow, high-ceilinged, and long; its shelves stock a jumble of shapes. Seventeen violins hang from a rack; there are dismembered instruments and cardboard boxes full of wood beneath the cluttered tables where the men bend to their work. They are in their twenties and thirties, convivial yet focused; they sport ponytails and paint-bespattered T-shirts and smell of resin, tobacco, and sweat. They rasp and sand and join and splice; they use clamps and calipers and scrapers and chisels and fine-pointed brushes and rags. There are boxes of spruce scraps, boxes of necks—labeled in black capital letters: CELLO, VIOLIN—a band saw, a poster of a Ferrari, cans of dental compound, rabbit glue, jam jars labeled "chicory" and "potassium dichromate," with which they will varnish "white" wood. The radio plays. I expect to hear Haydn, Vivaldi perhaps—but what these craftsmen listen to is rock and roll, a D.J. selling cameras and Reeboks and reporting on the weather and traffic in New Jersey.

Morel walks through. He moves from desk to desk, assistant to assistant, examining their labors' progress, joking about masking tape and how I will steal his trade secrets. Half the work they do, he tells me, is to repair what has been badly done in other shops. When it looks very bad, he says, it's often not so serious, and when it's very serious it's not always easy to see. He points to a patch near the sound post, newly fitted and glued into place. Each cut begins with a saw in order, as Morel explains, "to approximate dimension. Then we use knives and rasps to remove most of the wood, and then we get the shape, and then after this we use files and in the end scrapers for very thin shavings. And then sandpaper, and after sandpaper we wet the wood three times, because when you wet the wood the grain rises, and it must be sanded back . . ."

Although the violin and violoncello have changed their shapes with time—in the former case a little, in the latter quite considerably—the pattern as such remains fixed. I mean by "pattern" the quintessence of form and not its surface adjustment; the cello's functional proportions were no doubt determined by trial and error, and that process continues today. Routinely someone claims to have discovered the "secret" of a Stradivarius and to reproduce its excellence [illegible] plastic or metal or by computer; routinely th[illegible] someone is wrong. We may play electronic cello[illegible] ergonomically friendly cellos, reduced or outsi[illegible] cellos, but these are understood as variations o[illegible] a theme. (The change in the structure of bows [illegible] a separate but related subject; the beau idéal of[illegible] Tourte bow stands in much the same relation t[illegible] the run-of-the-mill version thereof as does [illegible] Stradivarius to a factory-issue machine.) And it [illegible] perhaps the case that contemporary instrumen[illegible] will "season" over time, sounding more impressiv[illegible] to the auditor in three hundred years. Still, th[illegible] art and craft of the luthier attained its height i[illegible] Cremona, and most modern practitioners a[illegible] tempt to imitate not alter that ideal.

It's as though Cézanne or Kandinsky sough[illegible] only to paint in the manner of Titian o[illegible] Brueghel, as though the contemporary write[illegible] tried only to write like the Greeks. For all prac[illegible] tical purposes this fidelity to the ancient mod[illegible] of instrument production remains the test o[illegible] excellence, and I know no oth[illegible] er métier of which this can b[illegible] said. Singers, athletes, architect[illegible] each profit from the new tech[illegible] nologies; they take advantage o[illegible] modern techniques. The luthie[illegible] too, deploys special plastic[illegible] chemicals, calipers, and ultra[illegible] sound for instrument repair. Bu[illegible] the aim is reproduction, not in[illegible] novation, and the model is a constant one.

To make such an instrument today would be t[illegible] scale the heights of achievement; to equal that ol[illegible] mastery is the best that can be wished. Com[illegible] posers make new music, sculptors new sculpture[illegible] and carriage makers new cars—but a Stradivar[illegible] ius in a private home or concert hall remains th[illegible] practitioner's dream. For performer and audienc[illegible] both, in the nature of their handling or the vol[illegible] ume and quality of sound produced, in terms o[illegible] aesthetics or acoustics, these wooden instrument[illegible] have neither been improved upon nor by tech[illegible] nology rendered obsolete.

Yet an instrument unplayed is an instrument ill[illegible] served. The use to which it must be put is audi[illegible] ble, and over centuries such usage entails stress[illegible] material fatigue. It's not like a text, which, print[illegible] ed, remains constant, or a painting, which, onc[illegible] framed, needs only to be seen. Fingers press on it[illegible] flesh brushes it; jewelry and liquor hover nearby[illegible] poised to scratch or spill; humidity alters fron[illegible] venue to venue and from day to day. The cellis[illegible] who performs in Rio de Janeiro on Monday, i[illegible] Seoul next week, and in London next month[illegible] subjects his instrument as well as himself to con[illegible] tinuous wear and tear. The glue will dry, the join[illegible] ings split, the wood itself will splinter or the or[illegible] namental strips of purfling crack and the varnish

ide. Inattentive or ignorant handling, a car crash r a train wreck or water or fire: such threats are mnipresent and everything's at risk. Strings, l ridges, end pins, sound posts—each sooner or later requires attention and must be replaced.

Morel is a born raconteur, and he likes to ell stories of contests of skill; the style includes odomontade. "I never had to work on commerial instruments. I had been trained in France, where my very first teacher was Marius Didier. He was seventy-two years old, and I was twelve years old, starting to make violins after school. Later, n Mirecourt, I studied with Maître Amédée Dieudonne. So I developed skill for making violins in the old school of violin making, in [illegible] der to earn a living I had to make them at the rate of two violins—in the white, without varnish—per week. We had no machinery, not even an electric motor. And when I came to Wurlitzer I brought along my tools, and they came with the band saw, and I said, 'Well, you take your band saw and I'll take my hand saw and we'll see who finishes first.' Also, who comes closer to the line, to the pattern. We didn't bet any money, but I won. I won out over the band saw. In my life as a luthier I seldom saw anybody else who could manage that way. It sounds as if I'm bragging, but I'm not. It's a true fact.

"When I arrived at Mr. Wurlitzer and prèsented myself to Maestro Sacconi—this I will never forget—he gave me a bridge to cut, for a violin, a Lupot. Maestro Sacconi spoke French, and he said, 'This violin is one of your compatriots, and this is the model I want you to cut, that's the one I like.' So I gave him the new bridge maybe forty minutes later, and he said, 'Already?' And I said, 'Yes, why not.' So he looked at it, and I'll never forget his face. He said, 'My God!' Then he looked and looked and showed it to his right arm, D'Attili; they couldn't believe that I'd cut it with my knife, you know, and they came to look at my knife because they couldn't believe that I'd done it with no knife marks, so clean and exactly similar to the model. The next bridge he gave me was for a cello, and after I'd cut it, he said, 'Bravo!'

The cello is, of course, neither the first nor the last wooden stringed instrument to have made its appearance in Europe; its ancestors include the lute and viol as well as the viola da gamba. Relatives include the violin, viola, and guitar. Its proper name suggests a "little violin," since "cello" in Italian is a diminutive, and the first such instrument clearly referred to in print—by Jambe de Fer in 1556—was a "violoncello da spalla," which refers to the manner of holding the instrument in church processionals or serenades. *Spalla* means hung across the shoulder and fastened with a [illegible] grown customary to abbreviate the name "violoncello" to "cello," with the apostrophe indicating the six missing letters. By now it's acceptable to use the name "cello" without the apostrophe and as a full designation; I have done so here.

This change in nomenclature suits the nature of such history; alteration inheres in the craft. Although the ideal of the instrument might lay claim to intactness, no "pure" Stradivarius violoncello exists. There are roughly sixty still extant, and each differs from the cello as at first designed.

No matter how earnest the performance of a practitioner of "early music," what the Maestro once heard in his workshop is not what we, listening, hear. What we look at is not what he saw.

A legend attaches to "Le Messie," the Stradivarius violin in Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, that it was rarely if ever performed upon, and there are many instruments housed elsewhere under glass. This has the virtue of preservation—of keeping an artifact out of harm's way—but the luthier's work had been, of course, intended to be played. And if form follows function, then the form must shift.

In the seventeenth century the literature was written for continuo (a bass-line repetition of the featured melody), but Boccherini and Bach and

Illustration by Biz Dempster

their successors wrote for solo performance. This expansion of the repertoire and shift of emphasis required an equivalent increase in acoustic volume and a heightened pitch. The neck was lengthened and bridge raised and the fingerboard and interior bass bar enlarged. In the nineteenth century traditional sheep-gut strings were wire-wrapped to augment the production of sound. The locus of recital also changed, enlarging into the concert hall, and an end pin was added to provide stability and anchor the frame to the floor. Today the violoncellist—unlike soloists on the violin, viola, or bass—must sit.

Here is Bernard Greenhouse on the first viewing of his instrument. The Countess of Stanlein was not Greenhouse's first Stradivarius; he had previously owned the "Visconti," a cello dated 1684 and in the "old pattern" (built up from

the viola da gamba). That instrument—now owned by Mstislav Rostropovich—had been "decorated," festooned with the Visconti coat of arms in order to disguise its added wood. The cello's sound, however, did not project well or merge compatibly with that produced by Daniel Guilet, the founding violinist of the Beaux Arts Trio. Therefore Greenhouse had been, as he puts it, "in the market" and was in Europe on tour.

"In 1957, the instrument dealer Jacques Français said he thought there might be a cello available near Cologne, in the small city of Aachen, and that if I were ever in the neighborhood I might just take a look. It happened that I was playing a concert in Cologne, and we had a free afternoon, and so I took a train to Aachen, which the French know as Aix-la-Chapelle. I arrived at the station and looked in the telephone book for a *Geigenbauer* (the German term for a luthier), then took a taxi to his shop and told him I was an Amer can cellist and had heard there was a Stradivar ius in the area. Did he know it and had he eve worked on it? The *Geigenbauer*, Mr. Niessen, sai by all means, yes. For many years it had been i the collection of a Mr. Talbot, who had died jus recently, and his wife still had the instrument.

"I asked him to call the daughter and find ou if I might look at the cello. Soon afterward a ma arrived, and I opened the cello case and fell im mediately in love. I had no doubt, no doubt at al that it was a Stradivarius. I didn't even look in side to find the label. The color of the varnish, th shape of the instrument, it was so beautiful, so ver beautiful, and it seemed to me a great jewel."

How did the cello reach Aachen; where had been before? It's not now possible to track the ob ject throughout its lengthy provenance: who firs commissioned or played it, how much it was val ued and by whom. There would be charm and dra ma in such telling—witness the film *The Red V olin*, in which we see a fabled instrument i various cultural contexts, from Italy to China and passing through various hands. That fil may well have been inspired by John Hersey' novel *Antonietta*, in which the writer imagines violin made by Stradivari while courting his sec ond wife, Antonia Zambelli.

In both cases the dramatic problem is the same how would this token of devotion be treated b musicians and collectors in the several centuries after having been created by a great luthier i love? In the film a nameless "Cremonese" mixe his dead darling's blood into the violin's varnish and the instrument thereafter becomes an emblem of fatal romance. Hersey's plot is also episodi and sequential. He makes Mozart admire "An tonietta"; Berlioz and Stravinsky fall, turn b turn, under its spell, till it fetches up on Martha Vineyard; thence the auction block . . .

Our information on the Countess of Stanlein' early history is limited yet suggestive. We know for example, that "the late Count Stanlein" pur chased it in 1854 from the French instrumen maker and dealer Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume, wh was the foremost champion of "Cremonese" in struments in Paris at that time. Let's imagine fo a moment that Count Stanlein (à la Stradivari i *Antonietta*) was courting a wife. He would hav commissioned a string quartet or perhaps hav been an amateur himself, so the name is his high compliment to their anticipated harmony: a nup tial gift of song. This was the period when cham ber music, as the term indicates, was still a privat matter; aristocrats routinely concertized at home The Count's betrothed may well have sung o played the spinet, and he would have desired t join her in the music room as well as in the bed It's less likely, though possible, that the lady her self played the instrument and that the "Count

…s of Stanlein" refers to the mute… to wh… t between her spread legs. There's a telltale splash … brandy on the rear plate of the cello where … e varnish bubbled and w… …ndkerchief or the hem of a raised silk under… …rment—wiped clean.

Or perhaps Count Stanlein had no wife and …ndled this substitute "Countess" instead. She …ould have been broad-beamed, deep-throated, …er color reddish gold. The instrument had pre…iously been owned—witness the title "ex. Pa…anini"—by that notorious rakehell and virtu…so, who sold it to Vuillaume. Vuillaume himself …as a celebrated copyist: his gift of imitation re…ains unsurpassed, and he built many cellos on …e model of the Countess—her proportions hav…ng been, by the mid-nineteenth century, ac…nowledged as ideal.

Here's what we do know of previous ownership, …mmarized dismissively by the brothers Hill in …heir *Antonio Stradivari, His Life & Work …1644–1737)*. As historians of Stradivari, the …Hill family—English dealers and instrument mak…rs—were, for many years, authoritative, and …heir work remains fundamental to what is ac…epted today:

> The most interesting … this instrument is the episode of its purchase early in the last century by Signor … list of Milan, and Pietro … authority both of Piatti and of Signor Pezze, also a pupil of Merighi, that in 1822, while the last-named was passing through the streets of Milan, … ceived a working man carrying, among other things, a violoncello on a truck or barrow. Merighi at once accosted him, and ended by becoming the owner of the instrument, which was in a dilapidated state, for a sum equivalent to 4s.! Eventually, about 1834–35, Merighi disposed of the 'cello to Paganini, who sold it to J. B. Vuillaume, who resold it in 1854 to the late Count Stanlein.

In 1999 I visited the cello at regularly spaced intervals—January, March, May, June, August, October, November. It was rather like attending a much-loved patient in a nursing home or, more precisely, a hospital: the Countess of Stanlein lay broken—shattered, albeit on purpose—and then in surgery and traction and reconstruction, until little by little she was healed. On first view—broken down into component parts and contained in a stall in Morel's locked vault—the cello appeared as forlorn as it must have to Merighi in 1822. In the streets of Milan it had lain on a barrow; in the streets of Manhattan it stood in a bin, but only the trained witness would have thought it a thing of great value or envisioned the instrument whole.

In addition to work on the varnish, Morel has three principal tasks. The first involves a patch near the sound-post top, which has been repaired before and unsuccessfully. The glue kept bleeding through minuscule cracks in the wood, and the luthier must remove and replace what was inept… …century. The second and more complicated project is repair work on the ribs, which have been both wormholed and previously buttressed—sometimes to the thickness of 2.5 millimeters where … of 1.5. Morel must remove all the old glue and backing, then repair the damaged wood and steam the backing of the ribs into their proper contours.

On May 13, 1999, for example, Morel takes a rib from its clamp. The wood had been in the clamp for five days, protected by padding and stretched to its original contour and its proper shape. There had been a doubling (a previous repair, with a second piece of wood glued on the inside), which Morel removes. The original width of the maple was 1.5 millimeters, and .3 millimeter of intact maple remains. Morel takes a new piece of unblemished wood and shapes it to the Stanlein rib, following the contour of the original exactly and attaching the two with glue. He lets the glue dry inside an airtight mold for two weeks. Then, removing it again, he reduces the width of the newly buttressed rib from 1.7 to 1.5 millimeters—thinning it down with a very sharp scraper to the desired thickness; smilingly he tells me, "You have to give it time."

An equivalent procedure holds true for the spruce top, which has bellied up and flattened out under the stress of the sound post and strings; this warp from "true" contour might seem infinitesimal, but it is redressed. For this purpose the luthier constructs a plaster cast in order to determine where there are, as he puts it, "bumps." The Stanlein top—delicately moistened in order to prove more malleable—is placed in a mold. All during the summer it lies encased in protective bindings beneath a sheet of brown paper so that the wood itself will not be touched, and then a sheet of wax paper, and then a sack of hot sand.

At the same time, Morel had been refashion… …is a combination of three or four previous repairs, and where the neck joins the scroll someone has shaved a segment off the peg box. This is a delicate job indeed, since, in order to repair it, the … paper-thin. It's not cracked but certainly at risk. … it used to beat the turn of the century," Morel explains. Instead he puts a piece coming through from the inside out. A patch would have taken him two hours; this takes him two days.

"If you look here at the scroll"—Morel points to its bottom edge—"originally, when Strad made the scroll, this part was not flat like this. There

would have been a little step from the fingerboard, but by the time they changed the neck and fingerboard for modern playing, you increase the angle. So they have been planing here. The curve should look more like *this*, not flat"—he finds a pencil stub and draws the curve's arc on a piece of scrap paper—"so if I angle it this way, it will be slightly below, which is how it was done originally. It has been unscrupulously restored before, but now we have respect for its value. So the original mortise will start like this. I'm going to leave [illegible] behind it, and here will come the fingerboard. If I did it the other way I would have to cut back some of the original, and that I refuse to do."

From 1707 to 1822, there's no formal record of the Countess of Stanlein's ownership, and we can only guess at who played and disposed of it how. The notion of a cello "on a truck or barrow," broken apart and ready for the municipal dump, then at the last minute rescued by Merighi, has operatic flair. More probably the thing was being trundled from one owner or shop to another; [illegible] at risk. But this did happen at a time, in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, when instruments were subject to rough handling. The "violin hunter" Luigi Tarisio—himself in large part responsible for the rediscovery of the "Cremonese" masters—was said to have walked into Paris with his collection in a sack. He had acquired his treasures in the north of Italy by just such wayward and wayside encounter, finding instruments in attics and church basements and the backs of barns.

So the Hill brothers' anecdote should be taken with a grain, if not fistful, of salt. By contrast, the certificate of authenticity issued by the firm of Hamma & Co., Stuttgart, on June 19, 1949, rings with unstinting praise. From the Stanlein family the cello would appear to have been sold to Paul Grummer of the Busch Quartet, who sold it to the Talbots, from whom in turn Greenhouse acquired it in 1958. The certificate has photographs of the top, the back, the scroll, and then a description extolling the virtues of the "*echt und zusammen gehörend*" instrument, the "*Violin-[illegible] Cremonese [illegible] Antonio Stradivari mo[illegible] mona 1707*." That "dilapidated state" of which the Hills complain is gainsaid by the German firm, which writes: "In all its essential parts a very impressive work of this master; it is authentic and belongs together . . ."

Still, not all Stradivari's creations are equally achieved. They were fashioned by hand and piece by piece and with slight variations in wood and color and shape. Little adjustments of size and proportion loom large in terms of acoustics; some instruments are forgiving and mellow, others harsh and stern. From 1680 to 1700 the luthier produced at least thirty violoncellos, of which twe[illegible]ty-one survive, and they are without exceptio[illegible] built of a large size (nearly 32 inches long, of [illegible] average, as opposed to 29 1/2). Acoustically the[illegible] instruments are an uneasy cross between bass v[illegible]ol and viola da gamba, and for seven years th[illegible] workshop produced no documented cellos. The[illegible] emerged the "great period"—a designation co[illegible]monly attested to—from 1707 to 1720.

The Stanlein comes from the first year of th[illegible] resumed production, and thereafter the patte[illegible] stayed fixed. The interval between 1700 and 17[illegible] is therefore a telling time, and what we think [illegible] as the *ne plus ultra* of violoncello production las[illegible]ed thirteen years. By 1720 the master's hand b[illegible]gan to shake or at any rate tremble a little, and[illegible] with some exceptions—the work thereaft[illegible] registers decline. His masterpieces of the "great p[illegible]riod" include such other violoncellos as the Ba[illegible]ta, the Castelbarco, the Davidoff, the Duport, th[illegible] Gore-Booth, and the Piatti. Often these we[illegible] named for the aristocrats who commissioned the[illegible] or the musicians who performed on them. At ot[illegible]er times they were named for distinguishing cha[illegible]acteristics—as in instruments called the "blond[illegible] (referring to varnish color, since the character[illegible]tic Strad varnish of the period is a deep reddis[illegible] brown) and (his last violin) the "Swan."

Here again is Bernard Greenhouse speaki[illegible] of his instrument: "The changes in the color [illegible] sound cannot be equaled. Color of sound is pr[illegible]duced on an instrument in three manners; the[illegible] are three elements to this, just as there are thr[illegible] primary colors in the painter's palette. We hav[illegible] the ability to place the bow closer to the brid[illegible] or to the fingerboard, and that produces a pa[illegible]ticular sound. In addition we have the speed [illegible] the bow, and the speed of the bow produces mo[illegible] sound without added pressure. That's the secon[illegible] primary color, and the third is the amount of e[illegible]fort we put into the bow. With those three prima[illegible] colors we can produce an enormous variety [illegible] sound—analogous, again, to what [illegible] painter does with the palette."

And this is the heart of the matter, the co[illegible] of the restorer's challenge. Since Greenhouse [illegible] completely pleased with the "palette" of the ce[illegible]lo, any change in color must be by definition fo[illegible] the worse. It's not so much a question of leavin[illegible] well enough alone as of separating out and pr[illegible]tecting what cannot be improved.

The luthier is conscious of this issue and th[illegible] exacting intensity of his client, and the two of the[illegible] consult on what can and cannot be done. A[illegible] some point, for instance (most probably in the la[illegible] eighteenth century), a workman cut away a re[illegible] section of the scroll so as to gain easy access t[illegible] the peg-wound strings. Morel could plausibly hav[illegible] filled in the wood and reconstructed the scroll-

it this has become ... nature ... [illegible] ... the ...
...llo, and the two men opted for consistency.
...oo, the brandy spill that marred the varnish of
...ne back has been reduced but remains ... part
... the Stanlein lore, and traces of that bubbling
...discretion—an admirer of Paganini perhaps, a
...overing lover of the Countess?—have been kept.

The neck itself has been replaced since Stradivari's time, and therefore, though exact, the act of substitution need not be exacting. The fingerboard glued to the neck is fashioned out of ebony; the wood of the neck is maple and rubbed with oil rather than varnished—must be contrasted to the color of the instrument as such. "In his country property Morel keeps a barn full of wood, and with barely concealed excitement he shows me a segment of old maple purchased in France some thirty years before [illegible] ... the country I looked for pieces I might use and I found—discovered again, in my attic—a piece of wood from the workshop of Vuillaume. It was cut quite thick and came from the ... grandfather's shop; my grandfather, at the turn of the century, was dealing in wood for all the violin makers of France. This piece is definitely from Vuillaume, because my grandfather stamped *his* wood with the initials PM. This was cut with a circular saw—you can see it on the grain, the *maille*—because they used hydraulic power and electricity had not yet been invented."

So the reconstructed neck brings this wheel full circle: in the mid-1800s Paganini sells the instrument to Jean-Baptiste Vuillaume, and at the turn of the millennium a French luthier restores it with wood from Vuillaume's private stock. What we have here—sent south from Paris to Marseilles, then shipped to New York and stored in an upstate barn until retrieved by Morel—is a piece of maple trimmed to shape and conjoined to an instrument built in Cremona: a constancy in change.

To restore the Stanlein so that it might seem brand new would be to deny its history, and this has been the operational dynamic from the start. It's not unlike the problem posed by restoration of a famed work of visual art. Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling—to take just one example—aroused disapproval when cleaned too thoroughly. A principal measure of any such instrument's value, indeed, is how much original varnish remains intact; there's a quasi-pietistic faith in the properties of Stradivari's "secret" formula as an ingredient of sound. Greenhouse remembers the excitement with which Fernando Sacconi informed him, upon first encounter with the instrument, "There's enough varnish on this cello, original varnish, to have made three or four violins!"

So where Morel replaces the wood he imitates antiquity, replicating the grain of the spruce by brushstroke (having copied the "original" on trac-

six million are being bruited now as sums—while the graph's curve points constantly up.

Consider this trajectory of purchase recorded by the Hills:

> A violoncello dated 1730, the property of the Hon. Mr. Greaves, was offered for sale by auction at Messrs. Phillips', bought in, and subsequently sold in 1866 to W. E. Hill, who resold it for £230 to Mr. Frederick Pawle. Purchased back in 1877 for £380, and resold to Mr. Edward Hennell in 1878 for

> £500. Again repurchased in 1880 for £475, and sold a few months later to Mr. C. G. Meier for £525. The instrument now migrated to Paris, and was there bought in 1882 from MM. Gand & Bernardel *frères* for £600 by Mr. David Johnson, and brought back to England, to be once again purchased by our firm in 1885 for £650.

Although these amounts now seem laughably small, it's important to note the regularity with which the instrument was purchased; only once did it register a small decline—of twenty-five pounds—and in the course of nineteen years its value nearly trebled. That exponential pattern of increase remains the case today. Stradivari produced only two known guitars, twelve violas, and a few dozen cellos but hundreds of violins, and value is of course proportionate to scarcity. While the law of supply and demand still obtains, the price will continue to grow.

The restoration has been estimated to take six months, but by March 1999 it's clear that all hope of completion by summer will have be wishful thinking. As the months wear on, Mo begins to allocate his Saturdays and Sundays the project; no phone rings in the weekend offi no customer approaches. When employed Wurlitzer or Jacques Français the luthier could i nore matters of administration and a balan sheet; now, as his own proprietor, he has to p attention. Where once the work could be uni terrupted, there now are the issues of getting ar spending, and his profit margin as a dealer is f larger than as a restorer. In the former instan the sums can reach hundreds of thousands of do lars, in the latter tens, so his concentration is d vided and his energy reduced.

"It may surprise you," he says, "but when wake up at night I ask myself what I'm going t do, and then I make my plan. When I was you I'd make my plan, I'd tell myself I'm going to d this, this, *this*, and no matter how long it wou take I would finish it. Today if I do two thirds what I've planned I'm very pleased with myse because my head is getting ahead of my physiqu When I come home at the end of the day m eyes tear. I try to watch a little bit of the news, ar I can't even do that, because it's very tiring. Whe you work all day with a magnifying glass it's ve very tiring, because the focus shifts. For instanc when I paint these grains here, I work very clos sometimes so close that I cut the end of my brus because it touches my magnifying glass, but m hands are still steady, thank God. I keep sayin if my eyes were as good as my hands I would sti work like when I was thirty. But in this class restoration it's the last one I can do."

At eighty-four, Greenhouse has grown sleep less also. "During many hours awake in the night he says, "and even in my dreams I've though about the instrument; when I first saw it in its di mantled form—lying on the bench in pieces—I stroked the ribs, almost as though it was a bod a living thing. I've traveled the world with tha instrument; it's been my companion for fort years. It was my career, my friend.

"Of course I did have moments when I though that, in this last period of my life, I could simpl have had the pleasure of playing the instrumen of keeping it at hand. I have to fight to keep awa from the telephone; my instinct is to call Ren every day and say, 'Hey, did you do anything, ha anything happened today?' But each time, I re mind myself that things should be done to the in strument, they should have been done before m time, and I thought I owed a debt to the cell I thought that it had done its service fo me, I owed a service to it."

In fairy tales all things may be restored. Tha which disappeared is found and that which wa hidden is revealed. The crone transforms herse

Illustration by Biz Dempste

r to a princess when kissed by a sufficient prince; he old grow young and fair and unblemished nd supple once more. To imagine the Countess Stanlein first played is to people the candlelit all with an audience: stiff-backed gentlemen wigged and bright-eyed ladies whispering hind their fluttered fans. The shade of Niccolò aganini hovers nearby somewhere, elongated, assionate, and bent above the bow. Or earlier—lerighi, and those who came to visit the maker imself in Cremona—the ones who came to purase or lodge an order or perhaps apprentice to e trade. Who knows what Greenhouse reamed the day he shut his eyes and saw himself youth once more, agile, in the Pyrenees and arning from Casals?

In such a dream a cello floats upon the perumed air. Ethereal, corporeal, it is the shape and ery contour of encapsulated sound. Its archings re perfectly rounded and smooth; its varnish leams; the purfling lends a definition and a darkness to the edge. From volute scroll to seamless ib, the pattern of the wood itself is intrinsicate with melody, suggestive of a promised plenitude: et resonant, yet mute.

On Tuesday, May 23, 2000, Greenhouse travels once more to New York. Morel has spent the weekend readying the cello for delivery—eturning the strings he removed in 1998, making adjustments to the sound post and to his newly cut bridge. He has prepared for this transfer carefully, stage-managing it to the last detail: an impresario. It is eleven o'clock. The musician, arriving, palpably nervous, says, "I have dreamed of this moment. I can't wait to see it. First I want to see it and then hold it and then touch the bow to the strings. But before that I have to warm up."

Morel conducts him to a secondary office and produces a Stradivarius that was built with a flat back. "It's one of two Stradivari built where he tried out a flat back," he says. "But this one is cut down, its back is not original. You can buy it if you wish . . ." The sound of this cello is muted and nasal, but Greenhouse plays it nevertheless, tentative at first: he is wondering, he tells me, if his own Strad's tone will have changed. "My fingers feel like sausages," he says.

After some time Morel reappears. "Are we ready, Maestro?"

In the large room at the atelier's rear there are signed photographs of Pablo Casals and Mischa Elman and Isaac Stern and photographs of Albert Einstein and Fritz Kreisler. Cello cases range like sentries at attention down the wall. Morel has placed a solid chair for the performer to sit on and, at the room's far end—some twenty feet distant, his back to the window—a second chair where he himself will listen in order to gauge projection. "All I did," he tells me, smiling, "was change the very slow."

a father with a newborn child or a husband with a long-lost bride, he receives the cello, embracing it, cradling it tenderly. He stares at the ribs, the front, the back, then turns the instrument upside down and reverses it again. He traces the edging, the purfling, the scroll. "Oh, René," he breathes. "It's beautiful. Bravo!"

At length he starts to play. He tries the open strings, tries fingerings, tries scales, and then searches for "wolf" notes—those places where the cello's vibrations might clash and make the sound wobble and go flat. Instead, in the echoing space of this room, the sound is pure, powerful, bright. "The voice," says the musician, "it's just head. Exactly how she sang before."

In a week or a month or a year, perhaps, Morel will make adjustments—but not now, not today. "There's nothing to adjust," the men agree.

Then there is lunch. This is a celebration, and we walk to a French restaurant in the neighborhood. Emmanuel Gradoux-Matt joins the party, and the four of us order champagne. "*Auf die Musik*," I offer, and Morel and Gradoux-Matt, clicking glasses, say, "*Santé*," and Greenhouse says, "*Tchin-Tchin*." Close attention is paid to the menu and then to the prospect of food. "But the red wine with the *entrée*," cautions Morel. "They serve it too cold here. We should have the waiter bring it already. In this matter they are not quite correct. It has to be *chambrée*."

I ask my father-in-law what he plans to do now.

"I'm going to put my cello in its case and take a taxi to the airport and buy it a ticket and carry it home." Greenhouse raises his glass. "And we will never ever be separated again."

At 2:30 in the morning of Thursday, June 1, 2000, three cellists are fondling a scroll. The cello beneath it stands mute. "Sensuous," says Yo-Yo Ma; "Sensational," says Ko Iwasaki, and Bernard Greenhouse, its owner, traces the instrument's neck. "Sensuous," says Ma again, and smiles and shuts his eyes.

This has been a long day. The week-long World Cello Congress III is taking place in Baltimore, and more than five hundred cellists flock to master classes and panels and recitals both exhaustive and exhausting. Wednesday's program, for example, has included a symposium on the Influence of Folk Music on Cello Literature, a discussion of Cello Music from China, Music on Jewish Themes, a workshop on Jazz Improvisation, a film, a master class taught collectively by Janos Starker, the honorary president

of the Congress, and Greenhouse, its artistic adviser.

The evening's concert, in Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall, has featured two young musicians, Wendy Warner in her twenties and the teenage Han-Na Chang. After intermission, and to thunderous applause, Yo-Yo Ma and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra perform a new composition, "The Six Realms" by Peter Lieberson, and Tchaikovsky's "Andante Cantabile Op. 11." Then comes the usual post-concert line of well-wishers and a bus trip for invited guests to a reception on a cruise ship in the harbor. The bus driver, however, gets lost; the ship proves difficult to find, tucked into a dark corner of the marina, and by the time the cruise begins it is well past midnight. Dutifully, drinking jug wine and decaffeinated coffee, the cellists and their sponsors make slow circles in the harbor while the engines thrum and mutter and the lights over Baltimore dim.

On the bus trip back to Towson University, where the artists have been lodged, Greenhouse invites Ma to look at the cello. Ma is gracious and respectful and, it seems, indefatigable. The night before, he had been visiting late with Starker; in a few hours he must leave for New York. But this cello commands his attention, and he and Ko Iwasaki appear in Greenhouse's suite. Ma carries his tailcoat over his arm; his dress shirt and black tie seem casual now, and he's sweating lightly in the late-spring heat. With a flourish, unlocking its case, the elder man produces his reclaimed "Paganini Strad."

"Beautiful," says Ma.

"Sensational," Iwasaki repeats.

"Here." Greenhouse proffers a bow.

The virtuoso demurs. Shaking his head, eyes narrowed behind wire-rimmed glasses, Ma studies the cello front and back, then plucks the strings and commences to play pizzicato. Iwasaki claps. After some time Ma takes the bow and—"Noodle a little," Greenhouse urges—plays a few notes lightly, dreamily, so as not to wake the sleeping guests. I ask him what he's hunting, what he listens for, and he says: the things it's easy to do, the things that are hard. It is three o'clock by now, and the men forget their resolution to be circumspect. "You should hear it," Greenhouse says. "Full-throated, down by the bridge."

Iwasaki excuses himself and collects his own cello, then returns to the room. He too possesses a Strad, dated 1727, but this is a copy of the one he left at home—one of six made by a luthier up in Michigan—and the men measure proportion, dimension, comparing instruments. They talk of other cellos, other makers, other performers. What they do not talk about is price. Yo-Yo Ma keeps caressing the Stanlein's scroll, and when I ask him what's the word [illegible] what this instrument possesses, [illegible] says, "Gravitas."

At the conference on Thursday morni[ng] René Morel gives a speech, discussing the tec[h]nique of instrument making and repair, its ch[al]lenges, its history. "I believe a lecture should be li[ke] a woman's skirt," he jokes. "Long enough to co[v]er the subject, short enough to keep it interestin[g]." The audience laughs. Then he discourses on t[he] physics of sound, the general problems of restor[a]tion, and "Cello Making for Today's Virtuoso."

Each day in the hotel suite he and Greenhou[se] have been "fiddling" with the Stanlein's sou[nd] post, shifting its position so as to apply greater [or] less pressure to the top. Since he wants a setup wi[th] which he is familiar, Greenhouse shifts bridges [as] well, first trying the original Sacconi bridge, th[en] the one Marten Cornelissen cut for his own co[py] of the instrument. "It doesn't fit," protests t[he] luthier. "You can put a dime under its feet. It's [a] good bridge, I'm not saying anything against t[he] bridge—but not for this cello," he says.

Greenhouse is unconvinced. "The strings [are] too high with the one that you cut for me. Y[ou] listen to it in this room, your ears are exceller[t] of course, I trust them absolutely, but *I'm* the o[ne] who plays. And it's too hard with this bridge."

"But that will change," Morel repeats. "Th[e] top has been lying alone for a year and a ha[lf] it will need to be adjusted. A month from no[w] Maître, you bring it back to the shop. Ar[d] then"—he spreads his hands—"we will s[ee] what we hear."

What they see and hear in Meyerho[ff] Symphony Hall, on the Congress's final afte[r]noon, is the refurbished instrument, its sour[d] resplendent now. As Greenhouse comes o[n] stage two hundred cellists stamp their feet in [a] drumroll of appreciation for their "artist [in] adviser." This will be his first appearance in th[e] full space of the concert hall, the first time th[e] cello "sounds out." He plays the solo in "Song [of] the Birds"—a Catalan folk song transcribed f[or] the cello by Pablo Casals. "'I have performe[d] it,'" Greenhouse says his teacher told hi[m] "'hundreds, hundreds of times.'"

It's a simple melody, an evocation of bird cal[l] and flight, an easy line to play and difficult t[o] master. This is mastery. Greenhouse has his ey[es] half shut, his old head bending heavily, his fe[et] and hands and body engaged, his cello in h[is] arms. Behind him rank upon rank of cellists li[st]ten and respond. "There were tears in our eyes," says Lluís Claret, himself a Catalan. "There wer[e] many of us crying."

The audience erupts. Greenhouse rises, bow[s] accepts flowers. "He has moved beyond music," the man beside me says, standing.

SHOALS OF TIME

Are we witnessing the extinction of the world's coral reefs?

By Julia Whitty

All day we've been observing the surgeonfish, which the Tahitians call *maroa* and the French call *chirurgien zébré*, streaming over the outer-reef slopes in tightly knit single files. Now, in the final hour of daylight, scores of these fish meet and coalesce into banners of yellow-and-blue, flowing gaudily over the contours of the coral toward the edge of Tiputa Pass. Here the mission of the fish unfolds as they bunch into agitated crowds of ten or twenty individuals, the groups rising above the reefs, swarming and butting one another in a chaos of seeming cross-purposes.



Stimulated by the onset of a moonless night in the South Pacific, the surgeonfish cluster, rise, bump, then drop back to the reef, disperse, circle, regroup, rise again. A dozen times they practice, each round taking them higher into the water column, farther from the safety of the coral. Finally the foreplay culminates in what scientists call spawning and what the French divers I'm with charmingly refer to as lovemaking. A pair of surgeonfish detach from the crowd and explode upward in an impossibly fast arc, at the apex of which the pair eject their sperm and eggs into the open water in a burst of milky smoke. The two fish never touch; inside

[illegible] lower, the reef erupts nearly unrecordable by the human eye. Other pairs follow. Meanwhile the [illegible] white puff balls hang in the water, seemingly still but in fact riotously mobilized as the chemistry of conception begins, sperm seeking eggs with only a moment for the micro-journey to succeed before the gametes are caught up in the monstrous outflow of water from Tiputa Pass and carried out to sea.

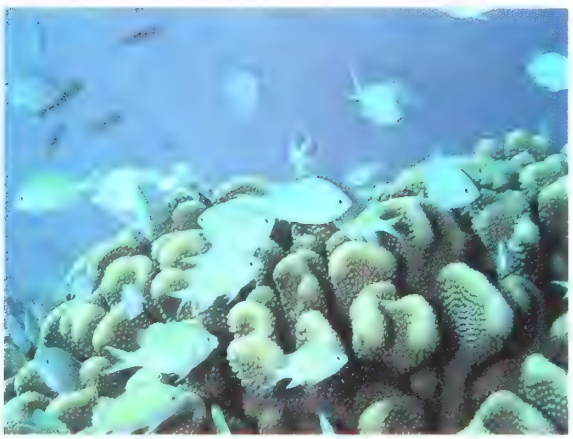
Motoring back to land, against a sunset as soft and mutable as a watercolor, we reach the dock and begin to disassemble and rinse our gear. My fellow divers have blissful expressions on their faces. It's always this way. It doesn't matter who they are, or the location of the reef, but in this case, today, as we return from Tiputa Pass at Rangiroa Atoll in French Polynesia, the [illegible] those of two strapping Frenchmen. Both guide here professionally, spending nearly a [illegible] their lives [illegible] If anyone would be paid it would rightfully be them. But quite the [illegible] has caught these tough young men in its spell and rendered them, [illegible]

[illegible] is essentially the [illegible] what we've always [illegible]

Julia Whitty's last story for Harper's Magazine [illegible] *collection of short stories by the same author,* [illegible]

is trivial. *Incroyable, eh? Formidable.* Still, the mood is joyful and relieved, as if we've conquered some summit and survived. The French divers are happy that their day's work went well and they were able to show me this secret. I'm pleased that I'll have it to write about. Back in my bungalow I check my underwater slate, anxious to transcribe its notes into my journal, then laugh to discover that there's only a single exclamation point marked on it.

Such is the paradox of the reef: a world that feels purely and extravagantly sensual yet, in reality, happens mostly outside our own sensory realm. Designed for the land, we smell nothing underwater, taste only the metallic twang of compressed air, see poorly, and are reduced to nondirectional hearing; in effect, we're disabled. Nor can we talk. Without language, I believe that human divers revert to an older state of mind in which thoughts are processed nonverbally. So the dive you've just made tends to be *felt* rather than accurately remembered, and the little plastic slate that you've dutifully carried underwater with you for note-taking reveals only doodles or strange hieroglyphs, made more difficult to decipher by the fact that the pencil marks (supposedly erasable by scrubbing with beach sand) never really do come clean, leaving you to contend with the ghostly outlines of all your previous, equally enigmatic dives. This is the struggle, or at least my struggle, working underwater: how to comprehend and then translate the otherworldly marvels to the world topside.



BLUE-GREEN CHROMIS FISH AND PAVONA CLAVUS CORAL

French Polynesia, which includes Tahiti, comprises more than one hundred islands sorted into five archipelagoes that taken together cover an area of the South Pacific larger than Western Europe. Rangiroa, part of the Tuamotu Archipelago, is the second-largest atoll on earth, enclosing a 400-square-mile lagoon within a bracelet of low, sandy islands called *motus*. Because of its geography, Rangiroa has one of the most dynamic reef systems anywhere.

Only two navigable passes pierce its 48-mile circlet, and so the changing of the tides produces an extraordinary phenomenon of pressures and counterpressures as seawater pours into the lagoon or rapidly escapes it. At these times Tiputa Pass is transformed into a maelstrom, inflow and outflow colliding in 15-foot-high standing waves which spin off whirlpools that appear underwater as snaky tornadoes of blinding sediment. The French call this phenomenon the *mascaret*, and the surgeonfish use its power to launch their fertilized eggs, the zygotes, on the first stage of their long journey.

No human diver can survive immersion into the *mascaret*, so we dive at its edges, where the noise of the riptide rumbles beneath the brighter soundtrack of the sea, the snapping, clicking, raspin buzzing, squealing, and grunting of fish, shrimp clams, and corals at work. For these creatures, the waxing and waning of the *mascaret* is an external force akin to a respiratory system, an enormous set of oceanic lungs that four times a day take a migh inhale, hold it briefly in the slack tide, then rele it again in a rush of exhalation. In this way the sy is enriched: huge loads of organic matter empt ing out of the lagoon to nourish the outer re slopes, immeasurable quantities of clear wat from the open sea rushing back to refresh it.

Yann Hubert is guiding the way. I've worke with him in years past and am familiar with H yogilike presence underwater. Simply put, he the best diver I've ever seen—a complete contra to his topside persona, which tends toward fidge boredom, chain-smoking, and amusing himse with incomprehensibly profane and colloqui French jokes. But down here he's a master, breath ing so rarely, so delicately, that fish sidle up to hi as if he were not like the rest of us intruders fro another world. I believe I understand his secre total compliance with the environment. Rath than challenge the currents, he remains still, u ing the minimum angulation of body or fins t move. Even so, when I surreptitiously check th air gauge on his tank at the end of several dive I'm stunned to see that he doesn't consum enough air to sustain human life.

This morning we descend through a tight packed shoal of sea bream, or *perche d'or*, wh rest in the shade cast by our Zodiak, then dow beyond them, through a phalanx of batfish, stee and triangular as arrowheads. Yann drifts off to n left, light as a falling leaf, through the center of silvery cyclone, thousands of barracuda riding on another's tails in a lazy vortex of their own mak ing. Far below, the coral appears, mottling th sandy bottom in deepening shades of blue. Larg animals drift over it: a manta ray sailing the edg of the current; ghostly schools of gray reef shark drifting in a state of near sleep, hundreds of ther packed shoulder to shoulder, shoaling like lowl sardines. This is their chief defense against eve larger predators such as great hammerhead or tige sharks.

Photograph © David Doubilet

One of the effects of the *maiaoiet* is to telescope habitats inside Tiputa Pass so that the creatures of the deep come here and mingle alongside the fish of the shallows. It's difficult to know where to look: to focus out to the depths, where the big animals dwell, or into the reef, where a metropolis of small life clambers through skyscrapers of coral. Occasionally something demands your attention by appearing suddenly from the edges of your peripheral vision. A white trumpetfish drifts past, long, narrow, positively un-fishlike. It travels in the manner of its species, vertically in the water, head down, large eyes circling around at me, not alarmed but likewise interested. We study each other.

Suddenly it blushes. Bright aquamarine stains its pale head, purple blossoms into its body. It drifts to a stop alongside an identically colored backdrop: purple coral head bedecked with a flock of blue-green chromis fish. There it hovers, confident in its masquerade, awaiting the opportunity to dart in and with a jerk of its tubular body vacuum up the one chromis too slow, foolish, or forgetful to survive this day. I lie on the bottom, awaiting the outcome, rolling gently back and forth in the surge from the surface . . . until Yann appears, silent in the near absence of his scuba bubbles, startling me with a touch on my arm and pointing to a stonefish the size of a football only a few inches from my knee. It takes me a moment to see it: a strange, nearly invisible creature that appears exactly like an algae-encrusted piece of coral rubble. Yet this fish carries enough venom in its dorsal spines to kill me. Yann picks up a real piece of coral rubble and places it gently on top of the stonefish, then points again, out to where the trumpetfish is drifting off with the tail of a chromis wriggling in its mouth.

These atolls of the Tuamotu Archipelago, crammed with the tense energies of life and death, are the end products of tiny coral animals, countless trillions of individuals, most no bigger than ants, living and feeding, reproducing and dying, over the course of millions of years. French Polynesia's reefs are formed in conjunction with shield volcanoes rising from hot spots on the seafloor. Yet long after the volcanoes themselves are extinct, after their islands have eroded and then subsided under their own weight back into the sea, the corals remain on their fossilized flanks, an exoskeleton of sorts, holding up all that remains of the land—the ring of sandy strips, or *motus*, formed by wave-borne debris tossed upon the barrier reef.

Corals are among the simplest of invertebrate animals, composed of little more than a hollow tube, the gastric cavity, surrounded by a fringe of stinging tentacles with which they capture prey. Reef-building corals secrete external limestone skeletons—the coral rock—pockmarked with tiny depressions where each individual animal—the polyp—resides. Related polyps are connected by living tissue through which they share digested food. Generation after generation of new coral grow atop the limestone skeletons of dead corals, until a reef is formed. Although the growth is incremental, less than one inch per year, the colonies can live a thousand years or more. Measurements in some Pacific atolls show the skeletons of dead corals stretching nearly a mile below the living reef.

In this way, working together, depositing up to 880 tons of limestone per acre per year, coral colonies construct the largest architecture on the planet. Australia's Great Barrier Reef has grown to 92,000 square miles, bigger than anything humans have ever built. Visible from space, it has conceivably already informed distant, alien intelligences that this planet harbors life.

Although many of the 6,000 species of corals and anemones are solitary polyps, or colonies of soft corals, or those that build flat calcium-carbonate formations in the seemingly inhospitable waters of the Arctic and Antarctic, the story of coral *reefs* occurs in the narrow band of equatorial water at the 21° C isotherm, where the delicate balance between sunlight, temperature, salinity, nutrients, and gases meets the exacting requirements of the tiny coral animals.

Part of the corals' finicky needs comes from the fact that they rarely live alone. During most dives, as you drift over landscapes of brain, elkhorn, star, and flower corals, you see only the skeletons of the animals. The polyps themselves are dormant and retracted throughout the hours of sunshine while the work of the reef is accomplished by single-celled plants, the microscopic dinoflagellates known as zooxanthellae that live within each coral polyp. Ordinarily, more than 6.5 million zooxanthellae inhabit each square inch of coral, and in return for this safe home these algae contribute the by-products of their photosynthesis: oxygen for the corals' respiration, carbohydrates for their food, and the al-



FROM TOP: GALAXEA CORAL, STAR CORAL, BRAIN CORAL, BRAIN CORAL, SARCOPHYTON SOFT

kalinity necessary for the animals to secrete their aragonite skeletons, the backbone of the reef itself. Incidentally, the zooxanthellae are also the source of the corals' brilliant colors.

The results of this marriage of plant and animal are phenomenal, and their symbiosis greatly affects the nature of the world's oceans, binding up roughly half the calcium that enters the sea each year and then depositing (along with each atom of calcium) a molecule of carbon dioxide, for a total of perhaps 1.5 trillion pounds of carbon dioxide per year. The corals' calcium carbonate production (part of their skeleton-building) is considered a likely mediator of atmospheric CO_2, and therefore makes this collaboration between plant and animal a contributor to the stability of our atmosphere.

Reefs are also wellsprings of biodiversity. Despite their small range (240,000 square miles, or only 0.1 percent of the earth's surface), the reefs constructed by corals and their zooxanthellae are home to as many as 9 million species of plants and animals, or at least one quarter of all marine life. Yet because they are a place where the plant and animal kingdoms wed, and in a sense procreate, coral reefs actually *foster* the process of evolution, creating not only new species but entirely new genera, or even families, of life.

Altered by climate and sea-level changes, cyclones, tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanoes, reefs are also the recordkeepers of the sea. Those built by scleractinian corals (our present reef builders) chronicle the last 245 million years; earlier reef builders, cyanobacteria and sponges, record billions of years before that. The history of these ancient reefs is not contiguous but rather one of fits and starts, explosions of life followed by long reef-less epochs. In fact, throughout time reefs have suffered extinctions, or near extinctions, including one about a million years in advance of the better-known mass extinctions of terrestrial lifeforms such as dinosaurs, raising doubts about the meteor-impact theories.

But whatever the meaning of the demise of reefs, the geologic record seems to indicate that there is a predilection on our planet toward the emergence of reefs, toward having something in the sea that builds habitats of such enormity and opportunity that much other life evolves around them. Older than the prairies or flowering plants, coral reefs have suffered and survived enormous changes in our planet's past. Yet today they are experiencing challenges not just from one front, but from a multitude of them—pollution, sedimentation, overfishing, rapid global climate change—which have combined to destroy a quarter of the world's reefs. Remaining reefs are in such great peril that governments are preparing for the contingency that millions of island residents might need to be relocated. Despite their consequences, these assaults on the reefs (which are t ripple effects of our own species' evolution in the most catastrophic extinction agent of time) are largely shrouded from our eyes, occu ring in the mysterious underwater realm where fe people understand or, it seems, care wh happens.

It can take years of experience to begin to s even a small part of all that the reef has to offe And see is about all we can do, though there is wealth of other information adrift in the sea fr electromagnetic fields, subsonic noise, subt changes in water pressure, and chemical tastes a smells. The ocean's residents possess an array specialized organs without terrestrial equivale that enable them to read the signals hidden to m the smell of a fish's anxiety, the taste of water ju filtered through a sponge, the sound of a wha calling hundreds of miles away.

But if you're observant you can use the ree inhabitants to augment your senses. The hum head wrasse, which the French call *Napoléon*, an imposing fish up to five feet long, with a overhanging forehead, thick lips, and a blue bo overlaid with squiggly patterns of green-and-ye low that look like the insides of a circuit boar This design is most striking around his eyes an as with so many reef fishes, continues right in his eyeballs. He is a stately, easygoing fello whose leisured life invariably allows him enoug free time to greet you on your visits. Follow hi and you'll find things you might not see, th cleaning station over there in the cool water un der the parasol of a large plate coral, where he res for a few moments while an army of small, dain tily colored shrimp crawl inside his lips, under h eyelids, around his undulating caudal fins. The work like fiends, tiny claws picking away wh knows what and frenetically conveying it to the mouths. The humphead hovers in a state akin t meditation. Only now and then he flinches, an the shrimp somersault off into midwater. Some one pinched him too hard. Never mind. He won hold it against them; he waits patiently until the come back aboard and resume their body work

One of the Frenchmen diving with me is young marine biologist who's spending a year sta tioned on Rangiroa. He tells me that the larg *Napoléon* begins its life as a tiny, completely tran parent larva floating among the zooplankton of th pelagic zone—the open ocean beyond the cor reef. He's filled with that mixture of enthusiasm and disdain that marks young scientists, enthus asm at the wonders of nature, disdain at having t explain them to me. So, I ask, just as with the su geonfish, the *Napoléon*'s parents met and spawne at the edge of a pass on an outgoing tide? H shrugs, of course.

The pelagic zone, where the surgeonfish and th

…pelagic begin their lives, doesn't appear visually connected to coral reefs. It's deep, monotonously blue, and empty by reef standards. From the surface you can look down and see nothing more than shafts of silvery sunlight converging a hundred feet below you. Many divers and much science shun this world because of its seeming impenetrability. But around mid-ocean islands such as those of French Polynesia the pelagic zone comes close to land, arriving suddenly at volcanic slopes, marching up them, then crashing ashore on barrier reefs.

For the denizens of the reef, including many of the corals themselves, this nearby open ocean is the nursery ground, a nearly limitless realm where their fertilized eggs go to hatch. Why exactly they do there is still not understood. Safety certainly is not a prerequisite, since mortality for larval reef fish in the open sea approaches 100 percent. Whatever the reason, the pelagic zone is where most eggs are, where they hatch into larvae, and where they then join the legions of zooplankton.

If you dive in the pelagic zone—or, rather, if you don't dive but, like most everything else here, drop and drift—you can see some of these plankton. By hanging under the surface, remaining still, then refocusing your eyes to a distance just beyond the tip of your nose, a world of new creatures suddenly emerges, translucent things with muscular winglike fins and pulsing combs of cilia that refract light into tiny rainbows. Nearly invisible, these tiny beings sail the currents of the globe, countless trillions of them drifting in ranks spaced as perfectly as divine geometry. Then, as you observe, some of these ethereal beings collide with you, yet there's no sensation of touch, as if you've arrived in a fairy realm.

But there's even more that you can't see. The fields of the sea are rich beyond measure, densely populated not only with these zooplankton but also with phytoplankton, the single-celled plantlike organisms that form the basis of the entire marine food web. And it's not just the well-known dinoflagellates and diatoms but entire ecosystems of newly discovered species: the ultraplankton, who, at 40 millionths of an inch in size, are today counted at 3 million individuals per ounce of surface seawater and may account for 70 percent of all the photosynthesis in the world's oceans, the even smaller heterotrophic bacteria, which help the ultraplankton to manufacture and consume carbohydrates and carbon dioxide on a scale science can't yet imagine; and preying upon them genetically, tinier things still, recently discovered viruses known as bacteriophages, which reach astonishing population densities of *3 billion* per ounce of ocean water. Taken altogether, the recent discovery of this micro-ecosystem is akin to finding the elusive dark matter of the universe.

Extending ever smaller, deeper, broader, and richer, the pelagic zone begins to embrace the [illegible]

For the [illegible] of the surgeonfish and all the other pelagic spawners, this planktonic realm is a phenomenal feeding ground in which to spend their youth (all nine to a hundred days of it, depending on their species), grazing and hunting. Perhaps, as some scientists propose, reef fish might be more accurately characterized as *pelagic* animals, with their coral-dwelling adult life simply the final phase of it.

In their youth, rolling through the 3 a.m. miles—Blue of the pelagic zone, the fishes of the coral reef take on extraordinary forms. Most are tiny, only 0.2 to 2 inches in length, and completely transparent. Many have long decorative spines trailing above and below them, no fins at all, and gigantic eyes that dwarf underdeveloped bodies.



This afternoon I'm acquainting myself with them not in the open sea but in an air-conditioned French biological station on the island of Moorea, a ninety-minute flight southwest of Rangiroa. A photographic library of these creatures is loaded into Vincent Dufour's computer here at CRIOBE (Centre de Recherches Insulaires et Observatoire de l'Environnement). One photo of his interests me particularly. It's the juvenile form of *Ostracion cubicus*, the yellow boxfish, or *more ritatta* in Tahitian. In adulthood this animal will have, as its name implies, a boxlike body enclosed in fused, bony plates. But in its youth it looks like a tiny yellow gumdrop, gaily polka-dotted in blue, with huge yellow-and-blue eyes and small transparent fins. How could such a tiny morsel of life navigate [illegible] current to return to its island, possibly the same island where it was spawned?

In the deep ocean, Vincent says, drifting, swimming weakly, hunting, and avoiding hunters, the [illegible] all the others like it grew, changed, and then, with the single-mindedness of salmon, returned to a home on the coral reef [illegible]

In fact, at this moment they're swarming in the waters outside Moorea's barrier reef. Tiny boxfish, surgeonfish, *poisson dragon*, *iihi*, *nohu*, *Cephalopholis argus*, *Centropyge flavissimus*—all the fishes named in all the different languages. They mass by species, sorting out their own identities, even though most are as small and invisible in the water as contact lenses.

Above them huge Antarctic swells roll toward the islands. Below them the stony corals of the reef's outer slope hunker down to withstand the surge. Ahead lies the barrier reef, the natural buffer between sea and lagoon. At its summit sits the most inhospitable zone of all, an impossible place where combers repetitively curl, break, then retreat: the algal ridge. Built by encrusting red seaweeds and cemented into place under the extreme forces of surf and sunlight, it is the final, seemingly insurmountable obstacle between the baby fish and the sanctuary of Moorea's inner lagoon.



PACIFIC DOUBLE-SADDLE BUTTERFLYFISH

The young fish are anticipating the moonless night to come, as restless and skittery as flocks of birds preparing to migrate. They will not travel through one of Moorea's passes, as too many predators are assembled there. Instead, as Vincent's doctoral research uncovered, they choose what seems a suicidal option. After nightfall, despite having never done anything of the kind before, they will gather under the humped back of a wave, ride up its powerful rise, then down its thunderous landfall, and *surf across* the algal ridge.

It's a trip that would likely kill you or me. Even now, snorkeling in Moorea's Irihonu Pass on a relatively calm day, I can see the power of these waves. From underwater they lift, then curl, forming beautiful, mercury-bright cylinders that barrel-roll up the barrier reef toward the algal ridge. The larger swells rear and corkscrew, appearing from underwater to pull themselves inside out until they've drawn to their full height, at which point they throw themselves onto the algal ridge, exploding in billows of blinding white bubbles. It's difficult to imagine the tiny fish, delicate as flower petals, surviving such a journey. Yet they do, and once inside the lagoon they swim in search of reef patches on which to settle. Because the best sites are already commanded by adult fish, t newcomers are relegated to less desirable areas

I've discovered one such place alongside a cru bling rock jetty inside Moorea's lagoon. App ently there's too much boat traffic here for the lar er fishes and also too many human fishers; but f the new arrivals it's perfect, the disintegrating c ment of the pier porous with hidey-holes, the b tom strewn with old tires, PVC pipes, soft-dri bottles, shoes. Amid this human detritus is ever thing you could ever hope to see on the big re at a fraction of its normal size. A black-spott moray eel no bigger than my pinkie finger snak out of a chip in the dock. A squadron of spott eagle rays, each smaller than my outstretche hand, cruises the wall of the pier, their striking d signs of white circles on black backs flexing wi each wing stroke. Inside an eight-ounce can th once held *jus d'ananas* (and exactly mimickin its colors) lives a tiny yellow-and-white octopu pale and translucent as a ghost.

All the fishes are here, too, most no bigg than dimes but already, within just a few days settling on the reef, having blossomed into the adult color patterns: a *huehue*, the tiny pufferfis whose radiating lines of green-and-orange ey makeup give it a look of happy surprise; a mini ture bird wrasse, its long beak probing a red spon in search of even smaller crustaceans.

Occasionally an adult of something or oth swims through, amplifying the illusion that I'v arrived in a watery Lilliput. A giant moray eel sta tles me with its six-foot size and its unexpecte daytime excursion from its home cave. I find m self diving to the bottom for cover, then laugh ing at such an overreaction. The fish, howeve have no doubts. All the bright clouds of the have vanished into the honeycomb junk around the dock.

The most remarkable of all Vincent Dufour photographs is of a pair of his own outstretche hands cupping a wriggling treasure of about fift of these jewellike young fish. They're all there, ir stantly recognizable in their adult patterns: but terflyfish, triggerfish, angelfish, pufferfish, box fish, surgeonfish.

This photo, displayed in Vincent's press kit, de scribes the premise behind his new venture, whic marks his own personal migration from science t environmentalism, via the unusual path of com merce. He's returned to Moorea from his home i France to launch an enterprise called AquaFis Technology. Since his return, CRIOBE has un dergone a small-scale building boom. He's ex panded an old storehouse, transforming it into bright clean series of rooms now filled with rack for aquariums of various sizes, sinks, sorting table pumps, filters. Upstairs, two small bedrooms wil house his staff, the young men and women eagerl

Photograph © Christophe Lepetit / Liaison Agenc

waiting the chance to nanny the baby fish. Out ce, the foundation is laid for two much larger aks, and the ground nearby is littered with ces of Vincent's own creation, the keystone to whole enterprise, a tubular steel contraption e calls a crest net. Once mounted on top of the rier reef it will collect virtually all the little fish at surf across at that point.

Since there's no immediate hope of breeding fish in captivity (because, at the moment, re's no way to re-create the conditions of *mass ect*), Vincent will leapfrog that obstacle, he ll capture the little fish as they return to the reef d raise them in the 3,500 cubic feet of aquar ms under construction at CRIOBE. As one of rhaps only ten people on earth who can iden- y these postlarval fish species, he'll be able to parate them into quarantine tanks where the rnivorous species will not consume the her- vorous ones. There he'll domesticate them, tai ring their food supply so they won't nibble away and destroy the home aquarist's expensive decorative corals.

The worldwide trade in aquarium fish—cur ntly worth $200 million per year and fueled ostly by demand among home aquarists in the United States, Europe, and Japan—is badly in eed of transformation. The collection methods re brutal. Using poisons, primarily sodium yanide, poor people destroy entire ecosystems in rder to capture the few stunned fish surviving on he perimeters. The sodium cyanide begins to ill corals and fish within thirty seconds of con act. A handful of fish at the outermost edge of he destruction, disabled but not dead, are then ollected by hand.

With each purchase of a lionfish or butterflyfish, he home aquarist, obliviously or uncaringly, funds his devastation. But if Vincent's plan works he'll e able to offer an alternative. Better yet, his echnology is low-impact and relatively cheap, vith the potential for installation in poor countries hroughout the tropical world.

I question him about something bothering me, hough, the impact of removing the newly ar- iving fish from the lagoon. I know that 90 per ent of these youngsters are destined to die with n a few days of settling there, but aren't they lestined to die inside the stomach of some lar- r, hungry reef fish who depends upon them? He dmits that his enterprise may not be up to the standards of deep ecologists, but his crest nets ill be mounted on only a small portion of the ire perimeter of the barrier reef. Of the two to four pounds of tiny fish captured each night, another *ten to thirty tons* will surf daily into Moorea's la- goon, without getting caught.

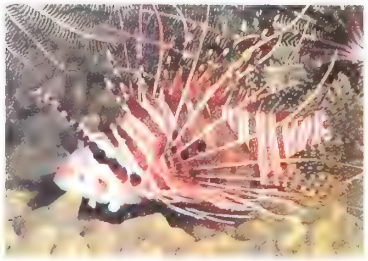
Vincent hopes to move beyond the aquarium trade and eventually to wrestle with the problem of the live reef food-fish trade, whereby living [illegible] they would like to eat, which is then fished out of the tank and steamed alive. Before the Asian economic crisis live fish in Hong Kong cost 800 percent more than frozen fish, and the favorites [illegible] fetched up to $[illegible] per pound. [illegible] Napoleon wrasse, sold for as much as $220. Aruna Seafood, the largest [illegible] Hong Kong, imports 12 tons of live reef fish annually. Vincent plans to raise fish for local consumption in [illegible] Polynesia, where most of the heavily populated land [illegible] overfished. Even a cursory glance at the menus of the [illegible] Moorea, and Bora Bora—where lobsters and reef fish no longer supply the locals' own needs. But according to Vincent's plan, one small net (no bigger than a desktop) will collect 4,000 baby groupers in one night's net set—fish that he will then rear to adulthood, providing food for twenty-two people for an entire year.

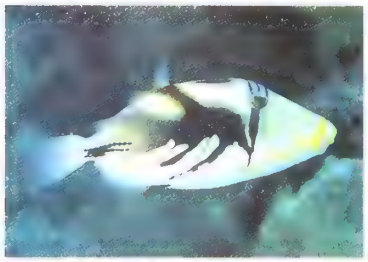
Aquariums like his, established in poor countries such as the Philippines, also could help end the most destructive of all fishing practices—the blast fishery. [illegible] for local consumption are collected with explosives: beer-bottle bombs filled with dynamite, or homemade fertilizer/kerosene mixes. The explosions kill fish at the epicenter by destroying their swim bladders, incapacitating those on the perimeters. Incidentally [illegible] from which they may never recover.

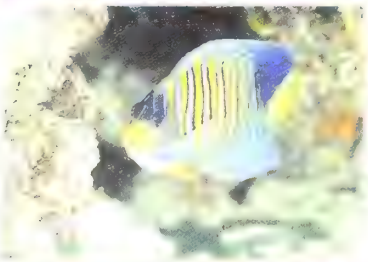
By raising captive fish, Vincent will also address the problem of ciguatera, a serious and growing [illegible] tropics. Wild fish are infected by eating poisonous dinoflagellates. The poison then spreads through the food web from herbivorous to car-



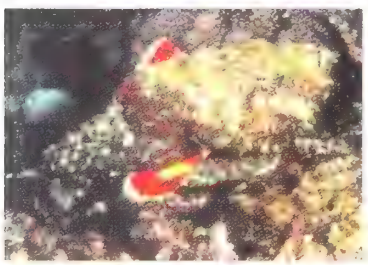
(TOP, BOTTOM), [illegible] *CORAL AND ALCYONIA SOFT CORAL*

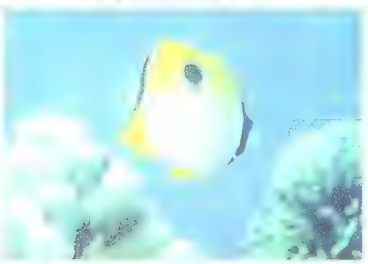












FROM TOP: LIONFISH, ANGELFISH, NAPOLEON, STONEFISH, TEARDROP

nivorous fishes to people, until today most of the tropical oceans are affected both on the reefs and in the pelagic zone. Human symptoms of ciguatera include diarrhea, vomiting, dizziness, muscle weakness, numbness in the mouth and extremities, inversion of the senses (hot feels cold), and paralysis. Bad cases may last for weeks; severe cases can be fatal.

Ciguatera flourishes on damaged reefs where the corals are dying and being replaced by algal (seaweed) turf, a definition that applies to more and more of the world's reefs each year. In Moorea, where each morning I snorkel off the beach outside my *fare*, or bungalow, the signs are ominous. Here the fringing reef inside the lagoon is akin to a great city on the verge of collapse. The skeletons of huge plate corals, killed in the cyclones spawned by the 1982–83 El Niño, lie broken, tilted on their sides or toppled upside down, as if chandeliers had fallen from on high. Thick mats of yellowy fibrous algal turf, ropy as old cobwebs, coat the debris. In between, vast stretches of barren sand prettily decorated with nothing more than dancing hexagonals of sunlight creep up to and over the petrified remains of dead cowrie shells, a moray eel strangled in fishing line, the empty gaping maws of giant clams. There are still lovely things too, dense schools of herbivores, convict surgeonfish, cerulean damselfish, goldtail demoiselles, humbug dascyllus. But here, in microcosm, is an example of the kinds of things that can go wrong when reefs and humans come together. To begin with, the island is becoming a bedroom community for nearby Tahiti and its capital, Papeete. People fed up with traffic on the colonial-era road system are flocking to Moorea, building houses here, then commuting back to work on Tahiti aboard fast ferries that make the trip in twenty minutes. Unfortunately, Moorea (as for all of French Polynesia and most of the tropical world) has no sewage treatment, and so the human waste from these new residents eventually leaches from septic systems into the lagoon, where it acts as a powerful fertil-
er, energizing the growth of the algal mat th
first smothers the living corals and th
fosters the explosion of ciguatera.

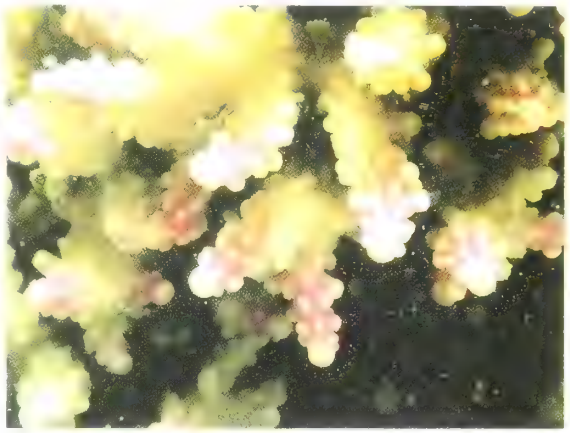
Just as with the wonders of the reef, most of
troubles are also beyond our direct sensory exp
rience. As you hover above an enormous yell
anemone, marveling at the way its resident colo
of clownfish dart in and out of the dancing ar
of its poisonous tentacles, can you judge the effe
of the Jet Ski that just tore by overhead; of t
fuel that leaks from its engine; of the impact of
noise pollution on marine life, which depends
sound for offense or defense; of the inevitable c
lisions with coral at low tide and the surface fi
left like roadkill in its wake? Or, for instance, h
can we really understand the outcome of de
sions made half a world away in France that awa
citizens there tax breaks for investing in dev
opment schemes, for which there may be no ne
in French Polynesia, or else no means of suppo
such as an adequate water supply?

Under assault from pollution, coastal dev
opment, agricultural runoff, overpopulation, a
overfishing, the world's reefs are exhibiting th
vulnerability in many ways. Each year new co
diseases are identified—black-band disease, whi
band, yellow-band, red-band, patchy necros
white pox, and on and on—perhaps cause
frighteningly enough, by the desertification
Africa, by huge volumes of dust in the atm
phere dropping viral and fungal spores into t
weakened seas.

Furthermore, as the global climate chang
sea temperatures throughout the tropics are r
ing above 30°C—the critical threshold at whi
the plant and animal marriage of coral and zo
xanthellae dissolves. Under stress (including th
of higher temperatures) corals expel their zo
xanthellae, rendering the reef a ghostly whi
Bleached corals suffer from a lack of protei
lipids, and carbohydrates, which undermines th
skeleton-building and reproductive cycles. A
though they may survive a few months like th
the divorce from their plant partners eventua
leads to necrosis of the coral tissues. The dead re
is soon invaded by massive algal blooms, a
thereafter by those who shelter in the dead co
skeleton, or those who graze on the plant life-
the mollusks, sponges, sea urchins, and herbiv
rous fishes who, taken together, form a bio-er
sive army, one acting with such efficiency that t
reef is quickly converted to sediment.

Although ancient corals did live in warm
seas, those living on earth today cannot ada
as quickly as climatic changes are occurring. In t
last two decades, worldwide coral bleaching ever
associated with higher seawater temperatur
have destroyed reefs across entire ocean basir

Photographs from top: © Marie Tomas; © David Doubi
© Christophe Loviny/Corbis Sygma; © Robert Yin; © Robert Ying; © Robert



I have dinner with Michael Poole, an American friend and a marine biologist with CRIOBE, who's lived and worked in Moorea for more than a decade. He, his Tahitian wife, Mareva, and their sons, Temoana and Tearenui, live in an old house on the northeast tip of Moorea, where the [illegible] beach. Here they can relax in the evenings and watch as courting groups of humpback whales travel by, and again in the mornings, as spinner dolphins, Michael's primary animals of study, re[illegible]

This evening we chat, drink wine, shuck shrimp, and listen to the ceaseless swoosh and thunder of waves breaking and retreating on the reef. Mareva reminisces about her childhood, [illegible] These fishes are hard to find now. She and Michael dis[illegible] which Mareva claims have too many bones in them for Michael, a Westerner, to safely eat.

hot, watery places from Florida to Bermuda and knows how to eat fish. Not these fish, says Mareva. You have to be born eating them. Michael counters that she can't eat a chicken nearly as well as he can, doesn't know how to pick *those* bones clean. They laugh, they're charming, the cultural divide, you suspect, an endless source of wonder and periodic exasperation to them.

It's difficult to comprehend the magnitude of threats facing the world's reefs, and here, over this pleasant dinner, we discuss the smaller troubles, the ones intimate to Michael and Mareva's daily life. In Mareva's girlhood fishing was a community activity, with each family member inheriting a valued role. Michael describes how on his first meeting Mareva's family he was sent out with her and a sister to the reef at low tide, each with a bucket and small tool to glean mollusks for the meal. Although Michael worked hard, clambering on the slippery surfaces, inexpertly prying clams from their holdfasts, when he returned to shore his bucket held a meager prize of only half a dozen, while Mareva's and her sister's were overflowing—proving to him the value of her skills.



MOOREA

In traditional Tahitian society the coral reef was a source of social stability, awarding everyone a job that was generally fun as well as rewarding. Although many Tahitians still reef-glean, the rules are changing. Mareva says that once there was an etiquette, an unspoken understanding that the part of the reef nearest your own dwelling was your reef, not to be exploited by others without an invitation. Nowadays, not only does the ferry deliver new residents to Moorea; it also brings hordes of weekenders from Tahiti, the Sunday fishermen, the spearfishermen, the Jet Skiers, the gleaners, altering both the lifestyle and the community of the island.

The next morning Michael points out a small protest under way in the lagoon, a dozen or so outrigger canoes, fishing skiffs, and plastic dinghies tied together offshore, all bedecked with beach umbrellas and packed tightly with Mooreans. They've tethered themselves to a yellow dredger, which is about to begin pumping sand from around the lagoon to replenish the beachfront lost during the construction of a new Outrigger hotel. The Mooreans are upset; this is their sand, a its loss will undermine their own beaches a further degrade their reefs. They're determined prevent the dredger from operating, and ha enlisted a contingent of supporters onshore hold up signs handwritten in French and Tal tian for passing motorists to see: DON'T TOUCH O SAND; THINK OF OUR CHILDREN.

It's a tiny demonstration, yet as the days go it makes the local newspapers and the televisi news, partially owing to the tenaciousness of t protesters, the feeling that, ensconced in th small boats, cheerily trading picnic food back a forth, slipping in and out of the water to cool they might—rather happily—stay there forev Meanwhile the hotel continues its noisy co struction of a long line of over-water bungalo that stretches far out into the lagoon, ruining t neighborhood views and disrupting the natu waterflows so that all the beaches in the area w continue to erode, with or without the dredge

To me, the protest seems both sad and hopef sad because the territorial government nearly ways chooses to accept token fines in lieu of e vironmental compliance; hopeful because I c feel that this small gathering of people mig spawn something that will grow, spre and someday come back in force.

In the midday heat, when shops and business close their shutters and most Mooreans retreat f a nap, the protesters have slumped down und the thwarts of their dinghies, the only sign they' still there the occasional hand reaching over t side for a flick of cooling water. At this time ev the fish seek relief from the sun, and snorkeli out to the middle of the lagoon I find the unde side of a diving platform crowded with puffe fish, rabbitfish, Moorish idols, lemonpeel a gelfish, and a pair of teardrop butterflyfish. All a assembled here in the shade, to the jingling a companiment of the platform's mooring chain, hypnotic underwater chime driven by lazy wav at the surface. The fish face headfirst into t current, pedaling against it with the rotation their pectoral fins, as if dozens of fans were silen ly whirring.

The only large motion in this sleepy env ronment is that of a fish that the French ca *perroquet brûlé*, after the Tahitian name *pa paapaa anahi*, or burnt parrotfish. Dark yello ish-orange flanks do make this species loo burnt, perhaps sunburnt; and as if to prevei more of this it's also trying to get into the sha ow of the dive platform, but to no avail. In o der to approach, it needs to bypass a larg lavender-colored *Pocillopora* coral, from whic a squadron of dusky damselfish, drab charcoa colored fish many times smaller than the pa rotfish, emerge and repeatedly drive it awa

rlier, I watched them evict an emperor an- fish, a spectacular beauty with a black mask ged in neon blue, who expressed his annoy- ce by making a loud drumming noise as he t eated. Earlier still, they came after me, nip- g my fingers so that I had to swim by with y hands tucked into my armpits. One aston- ngly bold individual even swam up to the eplate of my mask, bouncing off it in a oxysm of pique so startling that I found my- f swatting at it.

first met these oddly pugnacious fish some rs ago when filming the work of an American logist, Mary Gleason. A small woman with a d graceful diving style, she possessed the keen and patience needed to decipher some of the f's best-camouflaged secrets. For three years she ceramic tiles on Moorea's lagoon floor, peri- ically collecting them for study under the mi- scope where she could count and measure the y colonies of corals that settled there. After first field season she noticed a pattern emerg- g; by the end of the study she'd discovered that ree times as many young corals survived if they ppened to settle inside damselfish territories.

Today, hovering with the fish in the shade of e dive platform, I can clearly see the reason y; by aggressively driving off all other fishes, ese damselfish protect the young corals just tting started. The *perroquet brûlé* they're cur- ntly mobbing, for instance, would otherwise ger here, excavating algae from the seafloor d with its sharp beak incidentally consuming fant coral colonies. Yet, as I know from Mary's dy, the little damselfish aren't defending the rals, only their own landholdings, the gardens own as algal lawns or algal turf growing in lds they've cleared between the pillars of coral.

Perfectly tended, these lawns are a neat mono- ilture of filamentous red algae, the fish having eticulously weeded out unwanted plants such as rgassum and turbinaria (which also happen to the main beneficiaries of untreated sewage, d therefore a bane to the overall reef). Work- g day and night, these tiny farmers drive off rbivorous fishes that eat their gardens. They rass carnivorous species, which steal the egg utches the male damselfish are currently brood- ng. In fact, they remove all marauders, including a urchins, which they carry off gingerly by the ines. In the years of Mary's study, when Moorea's efs had been badly battered by the 1982–83 El iño cyclones, only the corals inside damselfish rritories were beginning to recover—and are ill recovering far faster today.

As a visitor to the coral world, you might hap- en upon a damselfish colony, see little more han a gathering of unspectacular strangely ag- ressive fish, and quickly swim on in search of mething friendlier. Yet in the accumulated tasks of their daily lives, in their obsessive in- dustry, the damselfish play a critical role in the regeneration of reef. Remember—something Mary told me, I swim to the *Pocillopora* coral, braving the wrath of the damselfish to retrieve the pencil from my underwater slate and drop it in- to the center of their algal lawn. A ripple goes through the colony; the fish actually look of- fended. One individual darts in, grabs the litter in its mouth, then carries it away to drop onto the open sand well clear of the coral head before swimming back to join the twenty or so other damselfish angrily facing me down.

Mary's study—tiny by any measure—is itself an indicator of the state of our knowledge of the world's reefs. While it's difficult for an individual diver to perceive even a small corner of the coral realm, it's still more difficult for us to understand what's happening globally. Because reefs occur mostly in poor countries, in nearly inaccessible lo- cations, they're studied only sketchily. Much of what we know about their health comes not from scientists but from the scattered reports of dive op- erators, yachtsmen, and fishermen. Satellite im- ages tell something more, but most of what's happening to them is still veiled by the vast mirrored surface of the sea.

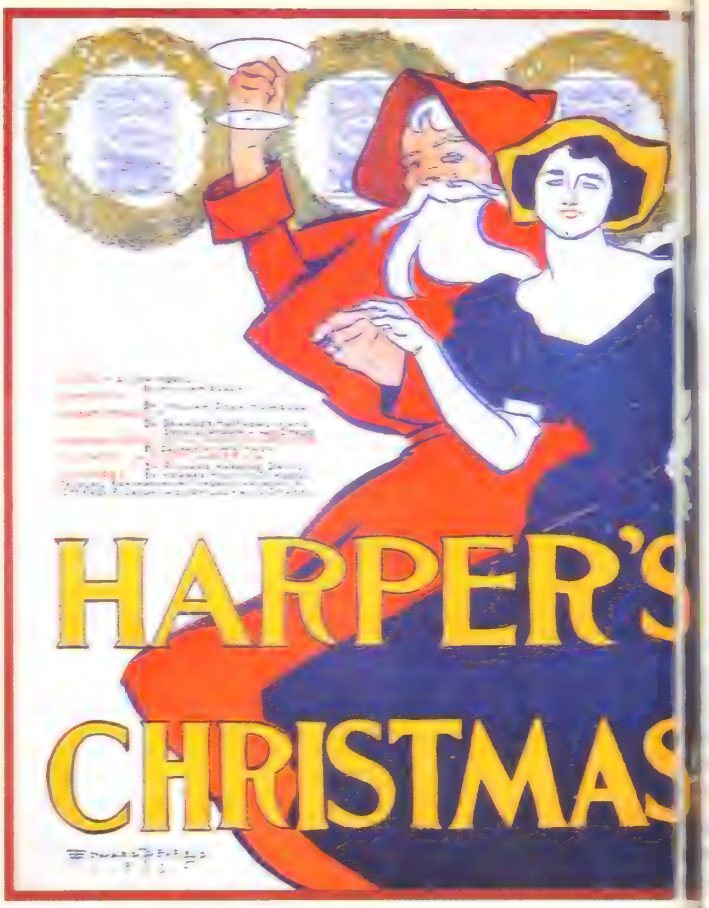
To the ancient Tahitians, the ocean around them was a cosmos as grand and mysterious as the sky, where gods lived not in the clouds but in the lagoon. This focus—so different from our own—may yet prove prescient. For while in re- cent years the world's attention has focused on rain forests (and coral reefs are frequently de- scribed as the rain forests of the sea), I would ar- gue that coral reefs are greater than rain forests if for no other reason than that they are far more powerful arbiters of life both in the sea and on the land. The reefs and the oceans they help stock are the chemical engine driving the planet, stabiliz- ing our climate, refreshing the air we breathe, making the rain that feeds the rivers and lakes and waters the crops upon which we depend. This water world and its most fertile core, the reefs, are the continuing cradle of life on earth.

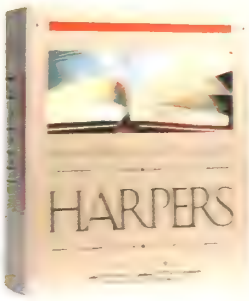
As reefs decline, there is some comfort in the long geological history of our planet, the knowl- edge that life comes and goes, arises and changes, on a schedule that has been extremely violent even in our absence. If the geologic record teach- es us anything, it is that, with or without either our help or our hindrance, the earth's reefs will vanish, and then re-emerge again, as long as the sun delivers its rays and the waters flow. What- ever [illegible] might play in the next great ex- tinction, it likely will have less effect on the tena- cious re-emergence of reef builders than it will have on species that grow can survive without [illegible] to be true. ■

AN AMERICAN ALBUM

HARPER'S MAGAZINE

1850 - 2000





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of [illegible]. Penfield (1866-19
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WHERE THE BEE SUCKS

A Northwestern [illegible]

By [illegible]



man, went the rumored stats. Many were victims of cocaine binges in the cities; cheated of their lives by drunkards; wrecked by yuppie greed, or by foul play, or by infidelity, or by that catchall malaise: stress. Here on this island they arrived, looking for a safe place to bring up their children. Myths were unearthed that the natives had fished, collected psilocybin mushrooms, clams, and oysters, but had not wintered on the island, because their women became too powerful and the men less warlike. In fact, said a popular local book, *Daughters of Copper Woman*, pre-contact natives in the area were matriarchal and matrilineal and, furthermore, believed that menstrual blood connected Woman to the divine.

These were just a few of the mythic verities that grew up around what swiftly became known as a sacred island. It was even discovered, and whispered about to the elect, that the Lion, Mary, and Michael lines, the three major ley lines of the world, passed through, lines of sacred energy that identified the island as having the same distinct pull and weight as the ancient city of Lhasa, the North Island of New Zealand, Machu Picchu. Women in the middle of the prairie were woken in the night by disembodied voices and told to come here. Women said that they were dropped here on their backs, arms and legs waving in the air, turtles dropped by a careless child, a tale suspiciously like a First Nations myth of origin. On these ley lines, vortices were discovered, and some were said to be portals to other worlds. Labyrinths were built on these portals. Self-identified as neopagans, and dedicated to reviving the ancient nature religions, the women agreed to agree on almost nothing but that the first witch was black, bisexual, a warrior, a wise and strong woman, a midwife, and a leader of the tribe. Standing on its head, therefore, the notion of the original evil witch Sycorax, or Morgaine, or the Wicked Witch of the West, it also was found that the original settlers in the 1850s were freed African-American slaves and Hawaiians, and this history gave resonance, depth, meaning, and power to this matrilineal island of outcasts.

The women, jealous of their place, commanded the elements to silence, wrapped the island in a fog, like Avalon, so that very few people, unbidden by the convergences, would come, and so that those who came, stayed, and did not fit in would be spit out by the goddess, as the island Wizard and limousine driver would have it. Even those whom the island loved were wrapped in sleepy clouds, their spirits bound up, lulled by the beauty of the trees, the ocean, the mountains, the birds, the rivers, and the nature spirits. The women studied the deep and abstruse texts of witchcraft and early tribal religions. Their states grew strange. They were transported, rapt in secret studies. And neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated themselves to closeness and the bettering of their mind with that which, but by being so tired, o'er prized all popular rat they lived on the social assistanc They developed their own ritua and calendars, held celebrations the solstices and cross-quarters, a raised beautiful pagan children wh believed in environmentally sou principles of living and who active promoted a way of life that wou not damage the Great Mother or a of her spirit or fleshly children.



There were many white middl class people on the island as well, d scendants of the original farmi families. Among the was our Ariel, who the spirit of delibera confusion and for t sake of standing all p triarchal archetypes their heads, shall be short, squat, ecofem nist, celibate lesbian late middle age, retir early from the educ tion business. Brigi we shall call her, r the Tir Nan Og Lig Centre on the sou end of the island a communed in solita splendor in her stra bale house with a h of nature spirits, i cluding fairies, gnom sprites, zephyrs, sal manders, and t Green Man, Pan. S worked with the spiri healing the earth a teaching people how live without money. Brigid knew t island, knew the spirits and wh they wanted from us. If she could accused of an excess of imaginatio equally she accused others of a t rich fantasy life. Neopagans, as w have established, agree on nothing.

Other members of the old farmi families watched in some amazemen as their land values rose and the forests were protected by those wh did not own them. Many of the fam lies saw the island as a future reso destination, a Carmel-By-The-Sea, waterskiing, hiking, kayaking, yach ing kind of place. And they were a gered by the notion that a bunch

ip pie mothers living on the social
elfare, dressing in long skirts, their
ildren in dreadlocks and grime, did
want this. The old families had
n kind. They had been generous.
hen the mothers first arrived, they
owed them where the best places
re, where to fish, where and what
plant, where to buy honey, what
its to keep, and the mothers had
en grateful, full of praise. The
others had joined the farmers' in-
tute, lauded the school, undertak-
to improve it, and taken booths at
e Fall Fair. Now, as honeyman
ve Harris put it, the families felt
at there were "far too many people
. Salt Spring who have no inten-
n of ever making a living."

The mothers met in a circle under
e waxing moon, best for the ban-
ing of evil forces. Ariel was called,
d the request was made to the
ion es and the trolls:

> Run upon the sharp wind of the north
> To do me business in the veins o' th'
> earth
> When it is baked with frost

The convergences were drawing
hers, less worthy others. The world
as intruding. The magic island
eeded some magic.

Act II

There are many candidates for
rospero on Salt Spring. Self-de-
ribed warlock Bristol Foster, a for-
er director of the Royal British Co-
umbia Museum, for instance, a
olfish man with multiple Ph.D.'s,
r Maureen Milburn, former presi-
ent of the Island Conservancy, who
olds her doctorate in art history,
eir libraries (and activism) duke-
om (or tenured professorship)
nough for them. Or Nina Raginsky,
ordinator of the Waterbird Watch
ollective, a self-described minor-
ague heiress, former *Time* magazine
hotographer, and lecturer in meta-
hysics. They are merely representa-
ives, behind them a flock of a few
ozen highly educated, committed
nvironmental activists, what our
aliban, a craggy, handsome former
orestry CEO named Tom Toynbee,
wner of much of the commercial
eal estate in the main village of
anges, calls (in public) the most
educated, articulate, formidable, and
committed people [illegible]

Many [illegible] people [illegible] when they [illegible] vill on the island [illegible] But December mob[illegible] store, the cafe[illegible], trade [illegible] the shops possible. Even the most pa-gan mother accepts that the island cannot do without him. [illegible] think he's a slave? Indeed he does, for the island is so beautiful that no one wants to work, except, he thinks, him. And they will not let him develop the property so that he can stop working. If he does not say in private, "All the infections that the sun sucks up from bogs, fens, flats, on Prosper fall, and make him by inch-meal a disease," then he is a saint, and despite the spir-itual nature of all on the island, well, it is unlikely.

Along with the witches who ar-rived in the late eighties and early nineties came a more successful sort. Gonzalos to a woman or man, they came with professions that required floatplanes and high-speed tele-phone cables, and they conceived of the island as a boomer utopia and rejoiced.

> . . . no kind of traffic
> Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
> Letters should not be known; riches and
> poverty
> And use of service, none; contract, succession,
> Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none;
> No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil;
> No occupation; all men idle, all;
> And women too, but innocent and
> pure;
> No sovereignty.

The Gonzalos announced that they would with such perfection govern t'excel the Golden Age. They threw their collective weight behind the Islands Trust, a govern-ment agency [illegible] and protect, and proceeded to strike committees [illegible] laws that restricted development.

Noble [illegible] witches [illegible] petitioned [illegible] Pathfinders and off-island incomes in ignorance the [illegible] Horse of [illegible]

it five weeks wit[illegible]

States had been drawn by the beau-[illegible] had exhausted the New Zealand forests arrived eager to exploit the [illegible] world.

[illegible] laughed at the mothers. Here, they [illegible]

Act III

[illegible] *life. Seeking to share her vast with Island nature boy. Dreadlocks, dulgent* [illegible] *ous dogs. '71 purple VW van.* [illegible] *far-away look a necessity.*

classified ad.

In 1989, in a fit of despair at city [illegible] country my paternal family had set-tled a hundred years before. Over the years spent in London and New [illegible] Spring. The witches danced naked [illegible] water to be not the Great Mother [illegible] when it behooved you not to cross. I would have laughed at these warn[illegible] first year of college I had persuaded a [illegible] was from a family of Bohemian [illegible] anymore because a curse had been

[illegible] their houses would burn [illegible] challenged, and dared her until, on the night of the full [illegible] he drew a pentacle on her kitchen floor. Five days later my professor called, professing eternal passion, and ten days later Jovita's apartment building burned to the ground.

I am cleaning up the remains of a hash-oil factory on my land and the [illegible] house run by hippie settlers. I collect dozens of old beer bottles, car parts, hunks of an old refrigerator, slabs of roofing, and add them to my slash pile. I, like Ferdinand, and all new residents, carry logs, back and forth, for years.

While I plod, I puzzle. Who are these witches? What do they want? They are not casting love spells, for romance on the island is considered best left to the very young. Many women are gay, or committed to the pursuit of cronedom, making middle-age, heterosexual love sporadic in incidence at best. Besides, given pagan [illegible] about every combination [illegible] and the combatants have retired early from the field, with bruised hearts and exhausted bodies, leaving the joust to their children. Pagan teenage girls are perfect and peerless, created of every creature's best, clean and healthy, nature girls all, usually ambitionless, since ambition is violence to the Great Mother. Young pagan island men, says Maureen Milburn's husband, Sam, travel from woman to woman, with gardening tools in the back of their pickup trucks, often leaving a child behind in each camp. Mainland boys pour onto the island, leaving the world (and cross parents) behind, attracted by the hippie chicks of Salt Spring, who are not, shall we say, overburdened by the desire for material possessions or [illegible] that Dolce & [illegible]

Loggers, fishermen, and developers [illegible] puzzled by the fact that none of their blandishments had any effect on these gorgeous young creatures, who saw them as abhorred monsters, which any print of goodness would not take, capable of all ill, savage, brutish, and so forth, methodically sent the word of the island abroad. With the help and moral support of some members of the old families, the Trust was besieged by applications for casinos, resort-destination hotels, and walled retirement complexes. The Trust planner had appointments lined up for months on end with developers from Asia and the States. Men walked about the island as if in a trance, marveling at their future,

> . . . and then, in dreaming,
> The clouds methought would open and show riches
> Ready to drop on me; that, when I wak'd
> I cried to dream again

Gunslinging developers hired high-priced lawyers to inspect the island bylaws. Legal challenges to the zoning restrictions were mounted. Secret allies were found, Gonzalos interested in selling their land for five or ten times what they had paid for it. The developers and loggers proclaimed their victory over

> this Sir Prudence, who
> Should not upbraid our course. For all the rest,
> They'll take suggestion as a cat laps milk.
> They'll tell the clock to any business that
> We say befits the hour.

Clear-cuts appeared on the pristine and sacred South End. A communal farm, one of the last hippie utopias, blew up, and the survivors put their few hundred acres of the last old-growth Garry Oak meadow on the island up for sale. A consortium of loggers from Washington State made an offer of $800,000. Three condominium developments sprouted in the town. A strip mall appeared, as if by magic, overnight, and two more were planned.

For despite the island's beauty, the loggers, fishermen, and developers were right: there was no local economy to support the pagan women and their children, and the social welfare was becoming suspicious and impatient.

Circles were held under the full moon, and Prospero consulted his books.

In addition to studying the White Goddess, the Welsh Mabinogion, the collected works of Starhawk, Lady Gregory's *Fairy Book*, and va[illegible] ous ecological texts, Prospero h[illegible] been reading Machiavelli, *The Art War*, and Tony Robbins. This eff[illegible] was delivered of an Official Comm[illegible] nity Plan that expanded the origi[illegible] eight-page document to more th[illegible] 300 pages, providing the island [illegible] 10,000 souls with more bylaws th[illegible] the nearby provincial capital of V[illegible] toria. Accusations of sin were ma[illegible] against men deemed not fit to li[illegible] Suggestions were made that the [illegible] velopers, loggers, and fisherm[illegible] should hang and drown their pro[illegible] selves and take up garlic farming.

War broke out. Ecoterrorists fill[illegible] the gas tanks of logging trucks w[illegible] sand. A witch struck a member [illegible] Parliament. The loggers burn[illegible] down the Community Centre o[illegible] neighboring island that the witc[illegible] had declared to be the gateway [illegible] the elven kingdom.

Stephano, who slid under the w[illegible] a sleazy time-share complex o[illegible] fragile water table, announced w[illegible] foolish bravado, "Who cares ab[illegible] the local residents—they're jus[illegible] bunch of goofers." Next door to t[illegible] time share, Goofer's Pig Farm rais[illegible] a giant sign, and the island sprout[illegible] GOOFER'S PIG FARM T-shirts a[illegible] bumper stickers.

"The plan makes *1984* look li[illegible] laissez-faire capitalism," argued Tr[illegible] culo, local poet and pig farmer. Pe[illegible] ple here, he said, "are always figuri[illegible] out what to do with other peopl[illegible] property."

But no matter how Caliban declar[illegible] the island full of noises, sounds, a[illegible] sweet airs that give delight and h[illegible] not, many developers gave up, for it [illegible] peared that every river, stream, mar[illegible] and wetland had its protectors. Th[illegible] were 200 pagans on the Waterb[illegible] Watch alone. No tree was to be fel[illegible] without a permit or an arborist in [illegible] tendance. View corridors were to [illegible] protected. Farmers were not to c[illegible] down their trees for fences or ba[illegible] without a permit. The water table w[illegible] deemed sacrosanct. No streams were [illegible] be dammed. No lakes were to [illegible] drained for the watering of packag[illegible] tourists dressed in un-environment[illegible] ly sound polyester. No hotels or g[illegible] courses or gated communities were [illegible] be built by those who would doubtl[illegible]s



Act IV

This is the charge of the goddess: ng, feast, dance, make music and ve, all in My presence, for Mine is the stasy of the spirit, and Mine also is on earth

—Reclaiming Collective's "Invocation of Goddess"

The battle joined, Patricia Brown, Maureen Milburn, and Marcia Craig, members of the coven called the Gaia Collective, summoned leading ecofeminist witches Starhawk and isch from the Reclaiming Collec-

opened, and going into trance and moving energy became easy and plausible, as if they were Celtic priestesses. They called in healthy power *over*, an energy the world had never experienced. They performed the spiral dance, and by the end of it they had created their own private world, filled with mummers, fairies, elves, gnomes, and powerful spirits, the witches' present fancies.

declared that each acre of forest

Dr. Marilyn Walker, ethnobotanist, former director of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife, and author of *Harvesting the Northern Wild*, ascended and declared that whereas Westerners talk about owning property, traditional cultures talk about stewardship. Walker spoke of the need to go beyond that, to cultures that have never lost the harmony among emotional and mental and spiritual. Traditional cultures, she said, all hold that plants have their own sound, their own song, and that they each have a lesson to teach and that therefore

> the poems the sky
> Where watery inch and
> messenger am I,
> Bid thee leave these, and
> with her sovereign
> grace,
> Here on the emerald in
> this very place,
> Become and spot her
> powerfully main
> Approach and Come that heaven and

Ceres had woken Angelique and Christianna to Saskatchewan and recommended that Christianna, a new fully realized being, move to Salt Spring and invite Amaterasu, a Japanese goddess buried in the earth for millennia, to the surface so that she might bring with her the devic kingdom, the spirits that weave energy into matter, and teach the people how to care for the land as sacred space. In the garden of their new house, Angelique and Christianna built a labyrinth on a ley-line vortex, and Amaterasu emerged through this

portal and scattered many jewels of Vitality and Energy and Aliveness across the island, and she called out:

> You nymphs call'd Naiades of the
> windring brooks,
> With your sedg'd crowns, and ever-
> harmless looks,
> Leave your crisp channels, and on this
> green land
> Answer your summons: Juno does
> command

The goddesses had ascended (that goddesses *de*scend is a patriarchal construction), and the healing of the land had begun. Prospero bid Ariel fetch the rabble to commence the referendum on the Official Community Plan, and before you can say, "come" and "go," and breathe twice and cry, "so, so," each one, tripping on his toe, was here with mop and mow—and video camera, torch, and plan in hand to hurl at the island trustees, then (retrieved) to burn on bonfires in village riots in Centennial Park. Fights began in the bar at Harbour House:

> . . . red-hot with drink-
> ing,
> So full of valour they
> smote the air . . .
> For kissing of their feet,
> yet always bending
> Towards their project



A witch spoke up and claimed that the island had prosperity enough. Had not a shopping mall of religious practices arisen: wicca, tarot, dream analysis, transformational massage, astrology, astral projection, precognition, psychic and homeopathic healing, meditation and yoga? Some of the resource-industry workers themselves had left their professions and opened shops to sell spiritual tat. In vain did Caliban decry the products of the forest:

> The dropsy drown this fool! What do
> you mean
> To dote thus on such luggage? Let's
> along,
> And do the murder first . . .

Regulations hunted the developers, loggers, and fishermen like hungry, angry dogs.

Act V

> Now does my project gather to a head
> My charms crack not; my spirits obey,
> and time
> Goes upright with his carriage.

All business on the island was spell-stopped, confined until the referendum. All the developers were distracted, and those with large properties they wished to subdivide were mourning, brimful of sorrow and dismay. Tears ran down their beards like winter's drops from eaves of reeds.

But Prospero's affections had grown tender. He decided that the rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance and rewrote the Official Community Plan in order to allow some development but not that much. Pace and proportion were to be the guidelines. Policies were written that deliberately excluded outside investors in situations where economic benefits went only to absentee landlords. If developers we to come to the Islands Trust wi plans that gave back Green Spac then some growth was possible. T marketplace would be delinked fr the land. Collective rules would held higher than individual valu The Official Community Plan w culled and simplified. Then Prospe called out:

> Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing
> lakes, and groves;
> And ye, that on the sands with
> printless foot
> Do chase the ebbing Neptune and
> do fly him
> When he comes back; you demi-puppets,
> that
> By moonshine do the green sour ringlets
> make
> Whereof the ewe not bites; and you, who
> pastime
> Is to make midnight mushrooms; that
> rejoice
> To hear the solemn cu
> few; by whose aid–
> Weak masters though
> be—I have bedimm
> The noontide sun . . .

Out of the fore streaming toward t voting booth, emerg three or four tho sands (the numbe are hotly contested) squatters with stake in the land, w lived off the grid school buses, ten yurts, tepees, a shacks. Some were shamans, w could transform both the seen a the unseen, who could journey other realms, who experienc trances and visions and could p dict the future, and who cou move between this world and a l substantial—though ultimat more real—world for the benefit others as well as the self. Insi sweat lodges they had contact other worlds and made their quests, and the spirits said that S Spring was to be held sacred. A so the tribe who worshipped t Magic Mushroom came out of t forest, along with their Fane, a

l the people marveled at Pros-
o's magic, for this tribe had not
e seen for years.

And out of their houses, streaming
r the voting booth, came the
vest arrivals, too, with autoim-
ne diseases that only a clean, pure
d with food products that were
bioengineeered or farmed with
tiple pesticides could cure. And
n these illnesses had come forth
u Debbie, Barb's Buns, Dan Ja-
's Organic Seed and Garlic Farm,
vid Wood's Salt Spring Island
eep and Goat Cheese, Green's
s—an entire economy of well-
s, just as the witches had said. It
s not for nothing that the princi-
mountain was called Mt.
xwell.

All torment, trouble, wonder, and
azement inhabit here, cried the
elopers as they watched the is-
d saved for the nature spirits.
nzalo himself saved the Mill Farm
m a consortium of Washington
te loggers by purchasing the land.
ven covenants were put in place
protect this plot in perpetuity,
d Ariel, representing all those who
ave the ether into matter, sang:

Where the bee sucks, there suck I
In a cowslip's bell I lie;
There I couch when owls do cry
On the bat's back I do fly
After summer merrily
Merrily . . . under the blossom that
hangs on the bough

Entire matrices of vortices opened
er the new Official Community
n was accepted and the develop-
restrained. Trees began to talk,
d all the plants were discovered to
ve an opinion as to where they
uld be planted. Radishes in mag-
gardens grew to the size of grape-
uits, and raspberry plants reached
n feet tall. Ariel suggested that
lt Spring should become like the
d mystery schools of Egypt and
ach people how to heal, how to
nd and manifest visions, how to
come elders, how to lead the Shift
Ages.

Unsuspecting tourists came and
rveled and spent money. And it
s discovered after all that display-
g and marketing the products of a
gic island indeed produced prof-
its—not huge profits, but profits nonetheless. And the businessmen finally agreed.

. . . do entreat
Thou put a charm me to . . .

This is as strange a maze as e'er men
trod,
And there is no this Fusimo . . . greater
than nature
Was ever conduct of

And they threw in their lot with Prospero, deciding not to infest their minds with beating on the strangeness of this business.

And still the convergences pulled others—not just tourists but artists and musicians and movie stars, all wandering the island with eyes full of beauty, blind with wonder. It was not for nothing, therefore, that the many Mirandas exclaimed,

How many goodly creatures are there
here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave
new world,
That has such people in't

Epilogue

But this is the twenty-first century, or almost so, and in this world we have Karl Lagerfeld, whose pet in the eighties was a young woman named Gloria, the Princess von Thurn und Taxis, a one-time Dusseldorf nightclub punk introduced by Karl, after her marriage to an antique cousin, to the thrills of the very rich, such thrills including couture, gambling, over-the-top decorating, and the pleasures of Area, Les Bains, and the Palace. A few years after her ancient husband's death, Gloria realized that her debts were insurmountable but that she had an old-fashioned forest estate way the hell and gone in Western Canada. She promptly sold it to a couple of development fiends.

Greenbaiting and greenmail are honorable business in the Northwest, for there is money in them. While waiting for their opposition to organize, the fiends made [illegible] to strip the Princess's erstwhile forest estate of [illegible]

The witches had withdrawn, buried their [illegible] and [illegible] filled with not-magic indigenous plants that jibed with the tenets of bio-regionalism. They had stopped going to community meetings, because they did not [illegible] violence and polarization of the past. They [illegible]

[illegible]
And what to me looks [illegible]
Will be [illegible]

But so, the witches [illegible] more and more [illegible] Collins, the former wife of the crushingly famous rock star Phil Collins, made sure that people the world over knew of the magic island and its dilemma. The witches took off their clothes and posed on their treasured island, and the calendar was blessed with many sales. Money was raised, pots of it—first in the amount of $85,000—from the community itself, more from a consortium of anonymous donors, NGOs, and government agencies. Thousands helped this time. There were blockades, and street people came from all over the world to live in the Peace Camp. People were arrested. People were slapped with nuisance suits. Community newspapers were sued for libel, as were columnists and editors. Dossiers and writs flooded the courts, until the government grew weary and pled for mercy, too.

Gentle breath of yours my sails
Must fill, or else my project fails

Then people with doctorates and bureaucratic expertise raised $3.9 million and placed it on the table. They then raised $7.7 million and placed it on the table. And finally they raised $20 million and placed that on the table. Then Prospero amazed the greenmailers by demanding that the land be frozen in time, left to its true owners, the fairies.

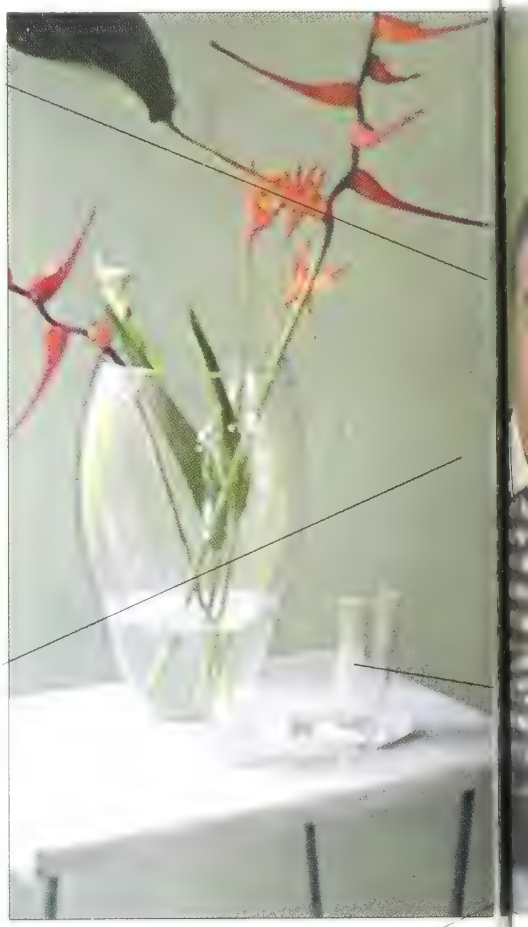
The witches rejoiced, for there had been parties, and dances, and fairs, and barbecues, and TV shows, and documentaries, and poems, and more parties, just as the Goddess required. And at one of the last, David Suzuki, who some saw as the greatest warlock of all, came to the island, and everyone who had been arrested or slapped or sued was his guest of honor.

The Princess's lands were proposed as a national park. And Prospero, by your indulgence, was set free. ■

POSTCARD

Applying Kremlinology to Peruvian s

Imagine you are Vladimiro Montesinos. It's fall 2000, and after ten years as head of Peru's National Intelligence Service (SIN) a videotape you made while bribing a congressman to switch his allegiance to President Alberto Fujimori has been leaked to the press. You've been forced to flee to Panama, which, though a longtime haven for strongmen, has to be arm-twisted by the U.S. and several Latin American countries into considering granting you asylum. But protesters both there and in Peru are demanding you be denied asylum and prosecuted for murder, torture, and election rigging. Your options are dwindling. So although you've rarely been photographed and are usually referred to as "shadowy," you decide to send a message. You sit for *El Panamá América*. It's hardly a candid shot. "We had three minutes and we were out of there," said the paper's managing editor. "The flower, the book, the glass, it was all in place when we arrived." By September 29, this carefully staged picture—"a message in the guise of an insipid hotel postcard," as one editorial would put it—had been picked up by the Latin press, the Associated Press, even the *New York Times*. To untrained eyes, the image might seem benign, but Latin Americans have scrutinized it as closely as Foucault examined Velázquez's *Las Meninas* or as carefully as the CIA analyzed Red Square bandstands.



Where's Vladimiro? Staged with an odd assortment of props in a nondistinct location, the photo looks like a scene in a surreal drama, or—as Gustavo Gorriti, a journalist arrested by SIN in 1992, put it—like "a place, located nowhere, where a salesman goes to commit suicide." Montesinos seems peaceful, even penitent, a pose that infuriated Peruvians familiar with his role in what Gorriti has called a "dictatorship of spies, dressed in the clothing of democracy." Montesinos, in fact, was trained at the U.S.-run School of the Americas and began working for the CIA in the 1970s. He brought himself and Fujimori to power in 1990 by leaking information helpful to the obscure agronomist's campaign; they soon became known as "Siamese twins." In 1992 he organized Fujimori's "self-coup," which instituted military rule in the name of fighting terrorism. Appointing friends to head the military and himself to lead SIN, he systematically imprisoned or eliminated Fujimori's critics and rivals. When Fujimori held elections, Montesinos's bag of dirty tricks helped to ensure his victory. He was untouchable, in part because, no matter what his crimes were, the CIA considered him an ally in the war against radical leftists and drugs.

Is this a belt? Or, as Peru's *Liberación* claimed, "a videotape . . . a characteristic message from the virtual president of a government now in exile." Like J. Edgar Hoover, Montesinos derived power (which many say was greater than Fujimori's) from dirt he gathered on rivals and allies alike. He allegedly has "a private Blockbuster" of 2,500 tapes implicating in illegal acts everyone from Fujimori to army officers to the CIA to foreign leaders—possibly why these all pressured Panama to grant him asylum.

I THE EDGE

adimiro Montesinos, *by Mark Schapiro*



As any student of Kenzo's art or shirts can tell you, flowers often stand for contrast—such as love or infidelity. This bird-of-paradise adds a touch of color to an otherwise drab setting and balances the composition of the picture. But what, if anything, does it symbolize? Is this alien bloom, so alone and out of place, supposed to stir sympathy for the exile? Or does this flower, arranged in the Ikebana style, point at a certain Japanese Peruvian—a reminder that, if the speculation is true, Montesinos doctored immigration papers to hide the fact that Fujimori was born in Japan and not Peru, and that his presidency has therefore been illegal?

Most people would say this shirt indicates nothing more than poor taste. But Peruvians note that it bears a striking resemblance to the prison shirts of those arrested by SIN's antiterrorism squad. When SIN captured Abimael Guzmán (the leader of the Maoist Shining Path guerrillas) in 1992, the image of Guzmán on trial, in a bulletproof glass cage, wearing such a shirt, was beamed into Peruvian homes each night. Others who have had to wear prison stripes include SIN officials who dissented from Montesinos's brutal policies and were themselves arrested and tortured. The shirt warns officers likely to betray him that they will "end up like this, convicted as terrorists," says Human Rights Watch's Sebastian Brett, who helped design the case against Augusto Pinochet and pressured Panama to deny Montesinos asylum so that he can face similar charges.

An op-ed in Panama's La Prensa, entitled "Manual for Reading the Photograph of Vladimiro," suggested this glass is "a perverse allusion to the death of Socrates," and that its half-empty water level warned of a pessimistic outcome for those who cross him. At the time of the photo, Montesinos's own prospects seemed half full; he was shopping for an island off Panama's coast. But then Fujimori promised to step down, and allegations arose that Montesinos had embezzled $55 million. Even the CIA turned its back on Montesinos upon learning that he'd helped to sell 53,000 AK-47's to Colombian guerrillas and provided protection to cocaine dealers while ostensibly leading the U.S.-funded drug war in Peru. (Pablo Escobar's brother claims the cartel gave Montesinos $1 million for Fujimori's first campaign.) Denied asylum in October, Montesinos returned to Peru. Initially his old cronies seemed to harbor him. But soon Fujimori was donning a leather bomber jacket and heading a posse of police and bloodhounds, vowing to capture Montesinos. For now, the glass of "El Doctor" seems half empty at best. Still, he may have the last laugh. [illegible] threatened was the one to warn Fujimori that he couldn't survive separation from his Siamese twin, it made good on its threat. Just before Thanksgiving, the president fled to [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible]

[illegible] Schapiro writes about international affairs for [illegible]*n.com,* The New York Times Magazine, The [illegible]*ation, and other publications. His article on money laundering appeared in the February 1997 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

FLOWERS OF GREED

Tulips in the ages of exuberance

By Matthew Stevenson



Discussed in this essay: *Tulipomania*, by Mike Dash. Crown Publishers, 1999. 273 pages. $23.

In matters of commerce the fault of the Dutch
Is offering too little and asking too much.

George Canning

In April of 1559, a Swiss physician and polymath named Conrad Gesner visited the home in Augsburg, Bavaria, of Johann Heinrich Herwart, a councillor who maintained a private garden of such beauty that its reputation had spread throughout the Holy Roman Empire. Gesner was a universalist, as suggested by the title of his most famous botanical work, *Catalogus plantarum* (among his numerous other works was a sort of proto-encyclopedia in which he set out to organize all the world's knowledge under twenty-one headings). As he walked through Herwart's garden, Gesner noticed a flower that even he had never seen before. Probably it stood alone, with a bed unto itself, as was the contemporary fashion. Later that spring, Gesner recalled the moment. "I saw this plant displayed," he wrote,

> prime from a seed that had come from Byzantium or as others say from Cappadocia. It was flowering with a single beautifully red flower, large, like a red lily, formed of eight petals of which four were outside and the rest within. It had a very sweet, soft and subtle scent which soon disappeared.

Matthew Stevenson manages a band and lives in Switzerland. He has contributed essays to a number of national magazines and is the author of the forthcoming Letters of Transit.

It is in Gesner's brief but eloquent description, as Mike Dash relates in his third book, an engaging new history of the seventeenth-century Dutch tulipomania, "that the first tulip definitely known to have flowered in Europe" survives. Gesner identified it as *Tulipa turcarum*, "acknowledging," Dash writes, "that its provenance was the Ottoman realm."

That word, *tulipa*, was still new to the lexicon of Western European taxonomy; it seems possible that Gesner introduced it. (A Netherlander by the name of Busbecq, who journeyed to Istanbul in 1554 under the auspices of the Austrian court, remembered having heard a Turk refer to the flower as a *tulipan*, but that anecdote was written and published long after the fact, in 1581.) In any event, the word was slow to catch on. For the rest of the sixteenth century, Dash tells us, most Europeans went on referring to the flower as *lilionarcissus*, "emphasizing its kinship with more familiar bulbous plants." Gesner, however, would have seen immediately how different this new flower was. The word he referred to in classifying it, *tulipan*, was a Turkish corruption of the Persian *dulband*, meaning "turban" (the flow
was thought to resemble one wh
closed), and may have been used
the Ottomans as a sort of nicknan
The proper Turkish word for t
flower was *lale*, and from Dash
learn that "in Arabic script, the l
ters that make up *lale* . . . are t
same as those that form *Allah*." Th
for the Ottomans the tulip was "l
erally regarded as the flower of Goc

The flower's true home lay in t
Central Asian valleys of the Ti
Shan, east of the steppe and west of t
Yangtze. By the eleventh century A.
bulbs had arrived in the Middle Ea
transported in the saddlebags of Tur
ish nomads. Already in the ear
twelfth century, Omar Khayyam cou
point to the tulip as a symbol of ide
beauty. During the next four centuri
the flower only grew in stature, so th
"by Süleyman's day," as Dash writ
"in the first half of the sixteenth ce
tury, the tulip had established itself

[illegible] Victoria & Albert Museum, London/Art Resource, NY

e quintessential Turkish flower." It
s under Süleyman that Turkish gar-
ners first began to cultivate new va-
ties of tulip, rather than simply
splanting the bulbs of "botanical
s" (those that grow in the wild) in-
their gardens. The science of breed-
hybrids was poorly understood
ener who wished to produce a dark
flower would pour red wine over his
s—but successful enough that when
great French botanist Carolus Clu-
set out to catalogue the varieties of
p in the late sixteenth century, he
tified thirty-four distinct groups
ybrids, though the flower had been
Europe only a short time.

Certain specimens reached Antwerp
1562. A Flemish merchant who
nd a packet of bulbs stashed in a
go of cloth from Istanbul thought
y were onions and ate most of them.
hat he couldn't eat he planted in
kitchen garden. Thus the following
ing, the first tulips in the Nether-
ds put forth their flowers. It did not
e long for the tulip to captivate the
tch in much the same way it had
otivated the sultans. In the Dutch
den age, thanks to the country's
gorous trade with the East, many
tch merchants possessed the wealth
quired to indulge their passion for
flower. The tulip had become the
cial flower of the Dutch elite. "Be-
use the most superbly fine varieties
re scarce," Dash writes, "they were
veted; because they were coveted,
ey were expensive. And because they
re expensive, they became increas-
gly lucrative to grow."

In 1633 the flowers essentially served
economic purpose other than to
ieve the cold wet spring with petals
t promised a change from the gray
st. At first, those trading bulbs were
rdeners and connoisseurs in search of
ral perfection. But as prices rose,
h and poor alike embraced the spec-
ation: the rich to get richer, and the
or to spin their otherwise impover-
ed lives into gold.

Between 1634 and 1637, the
nited Provinces of the Nether-
nds, of which Holland was the
ost important, made markets in
lip bulbs as if they were Internet
iblic offerings. At a time when
utch artisans lived on 250 guilders
year, a single bulb could trade be-
tween 5,000 and 10,000 guilders,
and small bulblets [illegible] were worth more than a townhouse in
Amsterdam or ships that worked the
rich spice trades of the East. Then,
in the winter of 1637, [illegible] the
speculation began. The bulb mar-
ket collapsed, leaving the Dutch, by
then a population of day-traders, lit-
tle more to do than cultivate their
gardens. Dash wonderfully describes
the moment when it all came crash-
ing down. A group of florists in
Haarlem had gathered on a Tuesday
morning, as they did most days. One
man offered a pound of bulbs for
sale, asking 1,250 guilders, a decent
price the day before. But today there
was silence. "It took only a few days
for the panic to spread through the
rest of the United Provinces," Dash
writes. "The market for tulips simply
ceased to exist."

One reason that tulips lent them-
selves to frenzied speculation lay in
their very biology. Most tulips will
produce only two or three offsets (or
bulblets) in a year, and can do so for
only a few years before the mother
bulb withers and dies. Dash writes:

> Once a grower has identified, in a sin-
> gle flower of some new variety, great
> beauty or strength that he may be able
> to sell, he will have—even if all goes
> well—quite possibly only two bulbs
> the next year, four the year after that,
> eight in the next year, and sixteen in
> the fourth year of cultivation.

In addition to limiting supply, this
made the flower an ideal product for
a futures market. Florists began sell-
ing not only the bulbs they had in
hand but offsets that the mother
bulb could be counted on to produce
the following year. From there it was
a short step to selling a certain
weight of bulbs (measured in minu-
tesimal units called *axen*), and the
bubble grew.

Embedded, therefore, in the mar-
ket's success were the seeds of its de-
struction, which appeals to Dash's
whimsical [illegible]

> The great irony of the tulip mania is
> that the most popular varieties, the
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

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virus that . . . explained why tulips, alone among the flowers of the garden, displayed the distinct, intense, and brilliant colors that collectors came to crave.

The virus was caused by aphids, a fact that was discovered only in the twentieth century. It caused the flower to "break," a process by which the solid colored or regularly patterned flowers normally to be expected from a certain bulb would instead come out striated or flamed. The virus also had the effect of weakening the bulb and reducing the number of offsets it could produce, only adding to a broken tulip's rarity and desirability.

The most celebrated tulip of the golden age was the *Semper Augustus*, which in 1633 traded for 5,500 guilders a bulb. "It had a slender stem," Dash writes,

> that carried its flower well clear of its leaves and showed off its vivid colors to the best effect. Beginning as a solid blue where the stem met the flower's base, the corolla quickly turned pure white. Slim, blood-colored flares shot up the center of all six petals, and flakes and flashes of the same rich shade adorned the flower's edges.

At the height of the tulip mania, certain *Semper Augustus* bulbs fetched almost 10,000 guilders. In 1642, a Rembrandt masterpiece, *The Night Watch*, sold for 1,600 gilders.



Coming from the lawn-mower side of the garden, I have never grown tulips, nor can I appreciate the subtleties of the now more than 6,000 varieties. On my last trip to Holland, I passed up the greenhouses to search near Arnhem for the "bridge too far." But I read Mike Dash with interest and pleasure at a moment when the NASDAQ index was in full bloom near 4,000, and when it was reported that NATO had paid $4 billion for its splendid little war in Kosovo (where, on the Field of Blackbirds in 1389, the Turks almost certainly carried talismanic images of the tulip with them onto the battlefield against the Christian army of Prince Lazar). Dash is a journalist and historian living in London. He writes with grace, letting the story tell itself, faithful to Thomas Carlyle's description of history as "a distillation of rumor." Like many, he was first drawn to the tulip mania as an example of market excess, what Alan Greenspan described as "irrational exuberance."

Comparison of the Dutch tulip mania with the markets of our own time are perhaps inevitable, but they are no less legitimate for that. In the seventeenth century the United Provinces lived off its trade; the Amsterdam exchange made markets in more than 360 commodities. But even during the frenzy, tulip bulbs were not among them, nor were they the province of a guild. In his book about the art and culture of the Dutch golden age, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, Simon Schama writes that "the bank was the church of Dutch capitalism; the bourse was its circus." Like e-traders today, many of those dealing in bulbs operated outside the organized exchanges. Markets were made in saloons, inns that had names like "the Beelzebub, the Finch, the Lion, and the Devil on a Chain." As Dash writes, "The trade was conducted for the most part in a haze of inebriation." Even though many of the "specialists" in this trade were local farmers with little co
modity sophistication, they turn
the bulb trade into a thriving futu
market, in which most deals ha
settlement date as distant as the
lowing spring.

"The Dutch," according to Da
"called this phase of the tulip cr
the *windhandel*. It was a term rich
meaning. To a seaman it meant
difficulties of navigating a ship wh
steering close to the breeze. T
stockbroker it was a reminder t
both the tulip traders' stock a
their profits were so much paper
the wind." The trading volu
around these promises to buy or
future tulips, during the f
years of the mania, "was
less than 40 mill
guilders." By comparis
deposits in the Dutch ba
ing system were 3.5 mill
guilders, and the Dutch E
India Company was capi
ized at 6.5 million guild
A lack of confidence, no
money, brought down
market. Word spre
through the tavern cleari
houses that prices w
falling, and soon bulbs t
had previously been quo
at 6,000 guilders chang
hands at 60. A standard h
tory of the period conclu
that "many a representat
of a noble line saw the f
tunes of his house ruined
yond redemption."

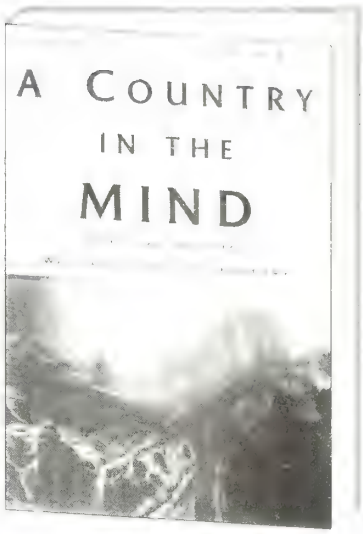
Dash views the collapse differe
ly, implying that the fortunes wi
off the table were notional fut
prices, and that the true losses w
limited to fractional cash margins.
the months that followed, the Du
courts, to limit the damage, refu
to hear suits involving the nondel
ery of tulip contracts, and allow
buyers to pay 3.5 percent of th
commitment and walk out on t
deal. The equivalent today would
volve America Online forgiving
losses of millions of day-traders.
the end," Dash concludes, "it h
been a craze of the poor and the a
bitious that—contrary to popular
lief—had virtually no impact on t
Dutch economy." When the mu
stopped, the court order that voi

ing settlements prevented the
lapse from bringing down other
kets of the golden age.

the end, Dash portrays the
ulip as the heroine of a failed
romance that begins in Central
ia, blooms along the Bosporus,
comes to ruin in Dutch taverns.
ne of his finest passages describe
dichotomy of the Turkish sul-
—adorning the "Sublime Porte"
heir palaces with countless tulips
ruling their far-flung empire,
fuding the Balkans, with a barbar-
s touch. Although he is content
void the moral refrain about how
kets always crash, many other
ers and commentators who have
oked *tulipomania* have made it a
tionary tale, usually in an at-
ipt to puncture a market in the
of a Yukon fever or to question
shibboleth of price equilibrium.
e many, I first read about the
lip frenzy in Charles Mackay's *Ex-
ordinary Popular Delusions and the
dness of Crowds*, published in
41 and later celebrated by such
vy investors as Bernard Baruch,
whom it preached the mantra of
ntrarian investment. For Mackay,
o called his book a "miscellany of
lusions," the madness surrounding
tch tulips recalled the follies of
hemy, the South Sea bubble, and
her market applications of the
ilosophers' stone. In the case of
ips, he wrote, "Nobles, citizens,
mers, mechanics, seamen, foot-
n, maid-servants, even chimney-
eeps and old clotheswomen, dab-
d in tulips . . . [until the collapse
en] substantial merchants were
uced almost to beggary . . ."

More recently, the case of Dutch
ips has been raised to predict a
mise in U.S. stock markets, no-
ly those in technology shares. But
lish's point that there were few ca-
alties in the tulip collapse will
mfort those for whom the market
s is always rising. An economist
r Deutsche Bank, Peter Garber,
s recently published *Famous First
bbles: The Fundamentals of Early
anias* to make the point that, more
ten than not, even runaway mar-
ts are efficient forces. As with Im-
ressionist paintings and starting

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quarterbacks, Dutch tulips traded at their premiums because demand exceeded supply. Further, Garber believes that Mackay and others exaggerated the tulips' exchange rates, confusing forward prices with the more reasonable spot market and also bringing to their stories a bias against capitalism, of the sort found in a Berkeley economics seminar. In Garber's worldview, now is always the time to buy a penthouse on Park Avenue or Oracle common shares.

Whatever its uses in history, the trade in Dutch tulips, when weighed against the Clinton era's conspicuous consumption, looks like a harmless diversion—a dabbling in lottery tickets. Dash ends his history in 1985, with a story of speculation in China over the red spider lily that followed the template of *tulipomania*. But what do the more recent bulbs say about our own imperial folly? Some examples from the garden of plenty: Kenneth Starr received a $40 million advance for a pornographic novel that never actually put the main characters in bed. Baseball team owners pay pitchers with losing records $8 million a season. The street value of a seat in the U.S. Senate exceeds $25 million. The chief executives of the sixty largest Internet or new-economy corporations average $27 million in salary, leaving aside the stock options buried in the proxy statements.

At the time of the tulip mania, Dash observes that there was a striking dichotomy in Dutch life: "the urge to save and the urge to gamble . . ." But in American life today, prosperity has ridden waves of debt. In the market itself, margin debt totaled $50 billion in 1993; today, it is $250 billion. In the last ten years, junk bonds outstanding have increased from $173 billion to $529 billion—the corporate equivalent of "payday loans." Net savings, as a measure of revenue, used to average about 8 percent per year, or $8,000 for every $100,000 of income. Today, the net savings rate is negative, approximately minus one percent, confirming F. Scott Fitzgerald's observation that nothing grows stale so soon as pleasure. Such is the fear of the debt bubble bursting that the Federal Reserve Bank, nominally a public institution, decided to organize a $3.6 billion bailout of the partners of Long-Term Capital Management, which, when stripped to its essence, ran a pyramid scheme that bet the ranch on the theoretical difference between the interest spread on corporate and government debt. The Fed came to the rescue as though the hedge fund were an Asian nepotocracy. The Fed has also committed itself to raising interest rates until Western markets regain their balance, evoking another faint parallel with *tulipomania*. Schama believes that Dutch government intervention may have had a hand in breaking the tulip bubble. But he also makes the point that Dutch capitalism needed the twin impulses of thrift and speculation to conquer new markets at home and abroad. He writes, "If anxiety about the amorality of money loomed large in the mentality of the magistracy, they were not immune to a contradictory strain in the culture: admiration for heroic materialism." In that sense, a mania in tulips had to be absorbed if markets were to function in those commodities on which the Dutch republic survived. Schama concludes that "the pilloried speculators were close kin to the tolerated stockbrokers."

In the late seventeenth century and through the eighteenth, the Dutch empire went into a slow decline. England, France, and the imperial houses of Europe—all of which had lagged behind the Dutch merchant class financially at the time of the mania—divided and conquered aspects of the Dutch overseas trade. The Netherlands' support of the American Revolution, including its supply of guns and gunpowder, made the rebellion a more likely success. But an early American minister to the United Provinces sensed that the heirs of *tulipomania* had suffered damages that were more psychological than financial.

At the time of the Revolution, our envoy, John Adams, wrote about the Provinces that "this country is inc in a melancholy situation; sunk in devoted to the pursuits of gain, cumbered with a complicated and plexed constitution, divided am themselves in interest and in sc ment, they seem afraid of every thi Could he have predicted that t words might one day describe the public he was helping to found?

January Index Sources

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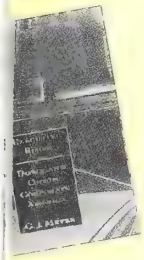


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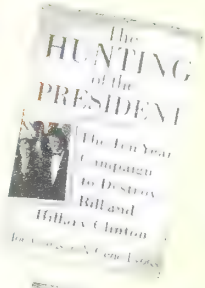
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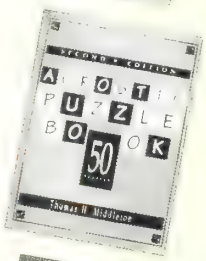
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WHAT YOU KNOW

By Peter Ho Davies

People suddenly want to know all about my students, what they're like. What do I know? I want to say. I'm just a writer, a writer-in-the-schools. All I see is their writing.

So what are they like as writers?

They're shocking. Appalling, in fact. Indescribably awful (and when a writer, even one of my low self-esteem, says that, you know it's serious). The good ones are bad, and the bad ones are tragic.



When at the start of each class I ask them their favorite books, their fifteen-year-old faces are as blank as paper. The better students struggle to offer a "right" answer: *Catcher*, *Gatsby*, the Bible(!). The honest ones, the stupid, arrogant honest ones, tell me, *For the Love of the Game* by Michael Jordan, or the latest Dean Koontz.

The most voracious readers among them are the science-fiction fans, the genre nerds, the heavy-duty bookworms (all those sequels and prequels, trilogies and tetralogies), but none of them are deterred for a nanosecond when I tell them that good science fiction is one of the hardest things to write. After all, they're thinking—I can see it in their eyes—it's just a matter of taste, isn't it?

As a matter of fact, no. I believe in the well-made story. Have your character want something, I tell them. Have a conflict. Have the character change. Learn these simple rules, and you can spend the rest of your life breaking them.

But most of the time I find myself telling them what not to write. All the narrative clichés. No stories about suicide. No flashbacks longer than a page. No narrators from beyond the grave. No "And the [illegible] woke up" endings. No "[illegible] woke up and then . . ." beginnings. No psyched [illegible] dream sequences. The [illegible] of boringly bad stor[illegible] ("But it's supposed to [illegible] boring, life is boring"); [illegible] on and on.

"No suicides?" they [illegible] in their flat, whiny voi[illegible] as if there is nothing [illegible] nothing better. "How [illegible] suicide be boring?"

Maybe not in life, I [illegible] plain quickly, but in [illegible] tion? Sure. It's a cr[illegible] world of readers [illegible] there—callous, heartl[illegible] *commuting* reader [illegible] who've been there, s[illegible] that, read it all before. "[illegible] not saying you can't tr[illegible] write about suicide," I c[illegible] sole them. "I'm just say[illegible] it's hard to do well, t[illegible] you owe it to the mate[illegible] to do it justice, to fin[illegible] way of making it real and raw for re[illegible] ers again."

Writers aren't godlike, I tell th[illegible] readers are. Writers only create; re[illegible] ers judge.

They nod in complete incomp[illegible] hension. Yes, they're saying. Yes, [illegible] see now that there is absolutely [illegible] chance we'll understand a word [illegible] say. We're just here for the extra c[illegible] it. It's the nod you give a crazy ma[illegible] lunatic with a gun.

What redeems it? My love of tea[illegible] ing? I do love teaching, but for all h[illegible] wrong reasons. I love the sound of [illegible]

Peter Ho Davies is the author of two collections of stories, The Ugliest House in the World *and* Equal Love. *He teaches in the M.F.A. program at the University of Michigan.*

n voice. I love to pontificate about
t ng, get excited about it, argue
t it (and usually win) with people
have to listen to me, more or less
ike my parents, my friends, my
g. But always, behind their acqui-
nce, behind the fact that howev-
ad my taste I'm still the coolest
ner they have (the competition is
stiff), lie the awful, numbing ques-
s "What have you published? Why
n't we heard of you?"

What really redeems it are the
hs. The laughable badness of their
e. The moose frozen like a *dear* in
headlights. The cop slapping on
cuff links. The *viscous* criminal.
escape goat.

's as if they're hard of hearing,
ching up half-heard, half-compre-
ded phrases, trusting blindly in
r spell checkers to save them.
nk! Thnk who designs spell
kers for a moment. Were these
ple ever good spellers?)

I once had a heated argument with
student about the death knoll.

Knell," I said.

Knoll," he insisted with vehe-
nce, until finally we determined
t he was thinking of the grassy
ll. My way might be right, he con-
ed grudgingly, but his way made
re sense. We took a vote in class
ey love democracy) and the ma-
ty agreed. And perhaps this is the
y that language, meaning, evolves
ore our very eyes and ears. "It's the
th mole of literacy," I told them, but
y didn't get it. Sometimes, I despair
language. If only there was some
for what I know to just appear,
antaneously, in their heads.

So *that*, if you really want to know,
hat my students are like. Does any
t explain why one of them last week
t his father in the head across the
kfast nook, rode the bus to school
h a pistol in his waistband, emp-
d it in his homeroom, killing two
d wounding five, before putting the
in his mouth and splashing his
ains all over the whiteboard?

No stories about suicide?
No viscous criminals?

n the moments after the crisis no
e thinks to call me—as the other
ff, the *full-time* staff, are called—to
rn me not to talk to the media. No
one, in fact, calls me except the
media. "It's CNN," my wife says, handing me the phone after I've picked it up as if I hold a snake in my hands. But we're *teaching*. CNN. I scratch my head and look at her and she mimes helplessness. It never occurs to me that my fellow teachers have been asked to say nothing to the media but that I, by some bright spark in Atlanta after trying five or six names and getting the same response, will be happy to add the faxed list before him to "Other" and found me, not quite a teacher, but better than a janitor.

What he wants to know is if I had taught the killer, the dead boy, Clark, and when I admit, and it feels like an admission, nothing to be proud of, that yes I have, I have him—*had him* (watch those tense changes)—in a writing workshop, I can hear the reporter lean forward in his chair, cup his hand around the mouthpiece. I wonder for a second about him, this young journalist, probably around my age, looking for his big break. This could be it, I realize, and I feel an odd vertiginous jealousy, almost wanting to hold back. But later, listening to my voice over and over on national TV—my entire photo from the latest yearbook and a caption identifying me as a writer floating over a live shot of the blank school buildings—I'm glad I talked to him, glad I didn't say anything stupid, that I come across as dignified and responsible. I answer all his questions in the first person plural. "We're shocked and appalled. We'll all be doing our best to help our students through this awful period. Our hearts go out to the families in the tragedy." Later my mother will call from Arizona, then my colleagues, even the principal with a warning not to say anything else, but an off-the-record pat on the back for "our unofficial spokesman." "A way with words," my mother will say. "You always had a way with words." Even though she's never read a single one of my stories. I tell her it was easy and it was. It comes naturally. For months now I've been talking in the first person plural. We're pregnant, my wife and I. We're expecting. We're about to be parents ourselves.

"CNN," my wife says, touching her stomach. "Something will happen." It's not often she's proud of me, and I'm

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pleased, even though I despise the network, its incompetent staff. I heard one anchor a couple of years back talking about a first in the "anals" of country music. Another time I caught a piece in which the President was described as being "salt and peppered" with questions at a news conference. Someone wrote that, was paid to. "I suppose I should be grateful," I tell my wife. "My caption could have read 'waiter,' not 'writer.'" And she smiles uncertainly, not sure who this particular joke is on.

What I tell no one, though, not even my wife, is the reporter's last question, off air, quietly into the air after he has thanked me and double-checked the spelling of my name. Only the tone alerted me, otherwise this could have been the same as any of the previous questions—"Was he a good student? What was he like?" This final shot: "Do you have anything he wrote for you? A poem or a story?"

I said, "No," but something in my voice must have made him wonder because he added softly, "It could be worth a great deal." So I said, "No" again, more forcefully, and then, "I'm sorry," and hung up.

Why was I sorry? Easier to explain why I said, "No," with that catch of hesitation. Because I couldn't remember, that's why. I had work upstairs, ungraded stories, the response to an exercise: "Write about a moment of extreme emotion—fear, hate, love, joy, laughter." The idea is to have them write about a true emotion and use this as a benchmark against which to compare the emotions of their fictional characters. Something by Clark might be there, if he'd done the assignment. They often didn't. And, indeed, when I look there's nothing, just a note—brief—he'd been sick, and below his own signature, another. I guess. It's ing. It takes me a second to realize; it's his father's.

So why was I sorry? Because I'm a writer-in-the-schools. I earn $8,000 a year ($6,000 less than my wife's bookstore job pays) and we are pregnant. I was sorry I hadn't had the nerve to say: "How much?" He might have even been bullshitting me, the reporter. CNN would never do business like that, right? But something in his voice, the shift of register, made me think he might have just slipped into freelance mode. The phone was hot where I was pressing it against my head, but for a second I could have sworn it was his warm breath in my ear. Now I wondered—$1,000, $5,000, $10,000? Who knew? I was only sure it would be more than anything I'd ever gotten for my own work. And out of this irony, of course, came this idea. I could write a piece by Clark. *I* could write it and sell it. I could. His letter was typed, printed. He was a loner, without friends. His father was dead. He was dead. Who would know?

No narrators from beyond the grave?
Have your character want something
Ten thousand big ones

As a plan it seemed so simple at first, at least if you separate it from the issue of morality. And separating from that issue is something I teach my students. Don't stop yourselves writing something because it might hurt someone—your family, your friends. Don't stop yourself writing it because you think it's too personal, sexual, violent. Don't censor yourselves, I tell them, at least not alone when it's just you and the paper.

Oddly, they're prudish. Reluctant to write about feelings, except in the safest, most clichéd terms. Love, sex especially, makes them sneer with embarrassment, while violence is simply comic.

"But what's the point?" I remember one of them asking (I wish I could say it was Clark, but I can't picture him any more than I can bring to mind the faces of three or four other boys who sit in the back row with their baseball caps pulled low over their eyes), "what's the point writing it if you're not going to show it to someone?" And I have sympathy with this. I believe in writing for an audience. Writing fiction is an act of communication—not just facts or opinions like a newspaper, but emotions. I tell them this. And in truth once something is written, actually expressed, showing it to someone—the desire to do that—is hard to escape. It's the momentum of the act. So I tell myself that writing a piece as Clark isn't the same as passing it off to others as Clark's, but once you've got it—especially if it's good—what else is there to do with it? So perhaps the moral p lem does lie behind this practical it should be easy to write this pie it doesn't have to be *good*, after a needs, in fact, to be bad to be go yet, after all the mockery I've he on their work, I can't do it. I can't itate my students.

God help me, I'm blocked.

Here's the trouble. If I'm to w this and overcome the lie of it I r it to mean something, to explain so thing. I want to offer, coded, bu subtly perhaps, an answer, a psyc logical, sociological subtext, that explain these deaths, and in expl ing offer some hope or comfort to u It may not be *the* meaning, but su any meaning, even a sniff of mean is what we want. It is the writer's stinct to offer these things, and, yond mere morality, I can't q shrug off this duty of all things, art.

Which is why I find myse my 1988 Subaru wagon, driving to a gun range on the inters called the Duke's Den. I have n fired a gun before and I decide this—everything else notwithst ing—is the problem. If I want to derstand Clark, take on his voic should at least try to understand i he expressed himself.

And this, too, is what I te them. Show don't tell. Write w you know. Did Clark's baseball bob at that one? Did he take n Some of them do and it still am me, makes me think they're mak fun, when in truth they only down what they don't understa "Show," they write carefully, " Tell."

Write what you know is e worse. They look at me as if asked them to raise the dead, they know nothing or everyth Some I have to persuade that t lives are important enough; oth that they're not quite as importan they think. But either way, w most of them know is deadly— the stories themselves, or their as such, but how they live th think about them. The best o they know this already. Know it an instinct. Write what they kn Not yet. Not until they know w

y know. But the worst ones' They
t even want to know what they
v.

So is that why we can't write
it suicide? Because if you know
u're, like, dead."

Yeah, and there're no narrators
beyond the grave, right?"

They look at me, so pleased, so
nest, as if they've figured it out,
I feel my heart clench. I think
it explaining that the rule really
ht to be: "Write whatever you
w just a little more about than
reader." But truly what I want
ell them is that these rules aren't,
r all, rules for writers; they're
s for people who are trying to be
ers but won't ever make it.

o I don't get any suicide stories
ough as one bright spark recently
ated out: "It's ironic, don't you
nk? Considering how many writ-
kil' themselves"). Instead, I get
-kiss stories, first-joint stories, the
th of pets, the death of grandpar-
s, sad fat girls, thin sad girls. The
e is always the same—life is trag-
tragically small or epically tragic
e chasm, come to think of it, that
cide bridges).

Lighten up, I want to tell them.
not the end of the world. You've
your whole lives before you. All
lines my father taught me when I
s their age and deciding to be-
me a writer, all the lines I've
ght them to recognize as clichés.
cept, as they like to remind me,
t doesn't mean they can't still be
e. Some people do have apple
eeks or strawberry hair or cherry
s (the fruit-salad style of physical
cription). Don't clichés, in fact,
ve to be true to become clichés?
, I tell them, we just have to want
m to be true.

What else do I teach them? Cer-
nly not how to be creative. I'm
t into breathing exercises, or free
iting, or journaling. Sucking up to
e muse. Nor even how to write
rrectly—I'm no grammar maven.
ow to tell stories" is what I told
NN, though the line never aired,
d that's closer to the truth.

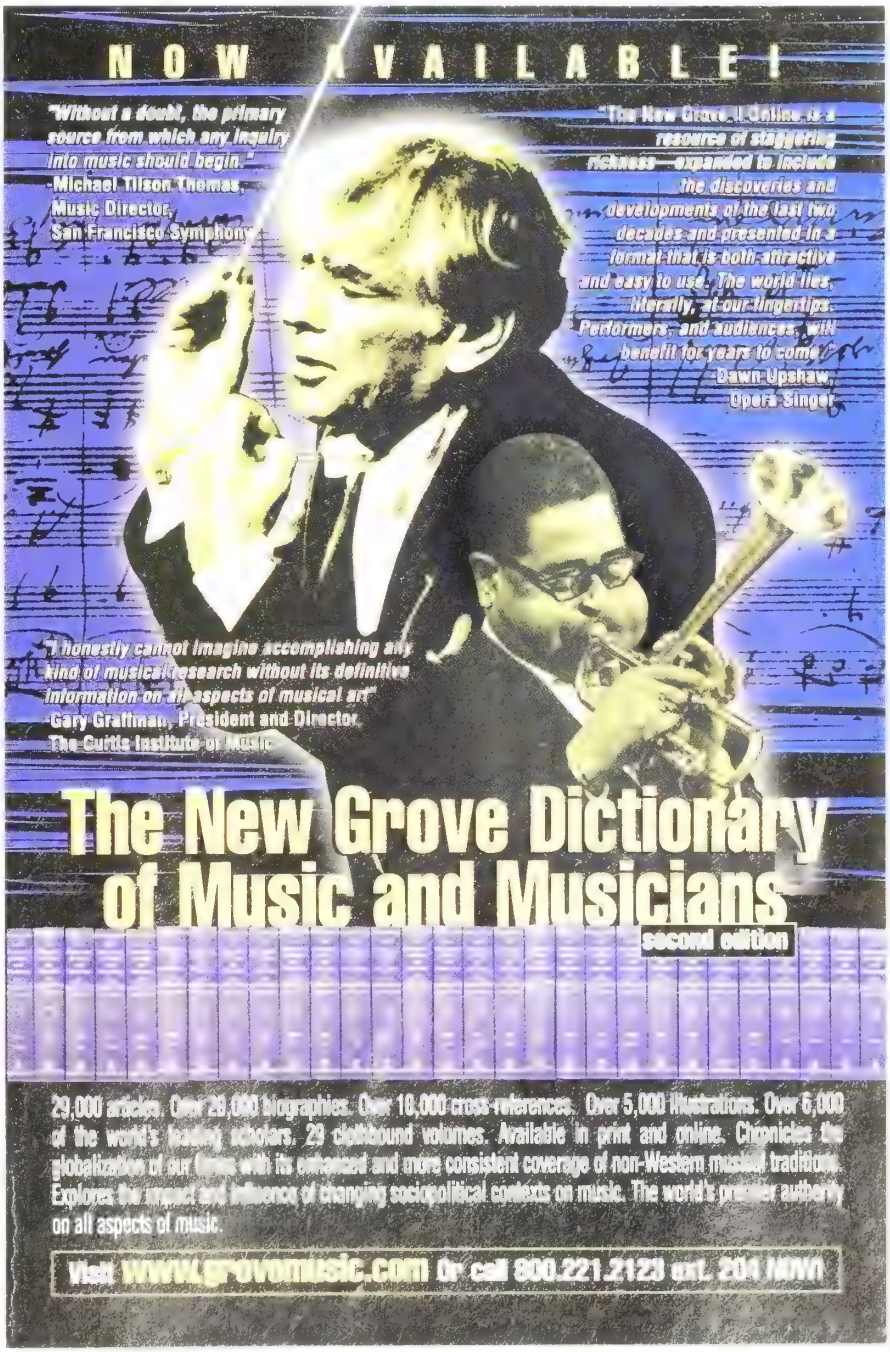
I teach them what Forster says:
at there are stories and there are
ots. That stories are simple se-
ences of events (this happened
and then this and then that), but
that plots are about causes, motiva-
tion (this happened because of that
on account of that). Plots are what
stories mean. And the trick is that
life is all stories and no plots, and
what we're looking for in Clark's
story is the plot that makes sense of
it. Which is why it has to be
someone's fault—hers, his father's,
the NRA, Nintendo, Hollywood, all
the escape goats—doesn't it? This
happened because of that or that or
that. Or all of them.

So I teach them how to catch
ries, or (since we're all storytellers
[illegible]
Because the way we tell stories ex
[illegible]

Write what they know? Mostly, I
[illegible]
they write.

So that's what I teach them: how
to plot.

And it that's beyond them, what
I try to leave them with is this: when



in doubt, when stuck, blocked, or fucked, to always ask themselves, "What if?" (Even if their instinct is to ask, "So what?")

What if I pick up a gun and fire it?

The range is quiet. It's the weekend after the shooting, we're still in shock. I show my driver's license and join for $25, which entitles me to rent guns from behind the counter for $5 an hour. It seems so cheap—what can you get for five bucks?—but as I buy ammunition for my choice, a .38 caliber revolver (I just pointed to the first gun I recognized from TV), I realize that this is what costs. Guns are just game consoles, VCRs; it's what you put in them that costs. The man behind the counter is unfailingly polite and helpful. He reminds me of a hardware salesman, the kind of guy in a brown apron who'll show you how to use a tool, dig out exactly the right size of wrench or washer for your job. The kind of guy who loves what he does and who'll tell you all about it if you're not careful. His name is Vern, and above his head, hanging up like so many hammers and saws on a workshop wall, are all manner of guns, not just pistols but rifles, even a replica tommy gun, the kind of thing Al Capone might have used. There's an air of fancy dress about the display; an air of the toy store, the magic trick. On a ledge at the very top of the display is a line of model railway rolling stock. Vern is a train enthusiast, a hobbyist.

After the gun and the shells—they come in a plastic rack, not the waxed paper box I expect—he hands over a pair of ear defenders and then asks, "Target?" I must look puzzled, because he repeats himself. "What kind of target?"

"What kinds do you have?"

He grins, glad I asked, and starts to show me. There's a simple roundel, each ring marked with a score, a sheet covered in playing cards for "shooting poker," the "classic" silhouette, a double one—of a gunman and a woman, his hostage—and finally a set of caricature targets of everyone from Saddam Hussein to Barney. I take the classic silhouette, and Vern rolls it for me and secures it with a rubber band. He hands me the lot—gun, shells, target, ear defenders in an EZ-carry plastic tray—and points me back toward the range, which is separated from the shop by double glazing. Through the glass I can see one man, broad shouldered, graying, balding, firing. "You put your headset on in the booth," Vern tells me, indicating the double set of doors between the shop and the range. "Take lane three."

Inside, with the ear defenders pinching my skull, the shots from the other man in the range sound like a distant hammering pulse. I set up in the lane beside him. Place the gun on the counter and the shells beside it, work the toggle switch that brings the target toward me on a wire. All this is familiar from the movies. When the target board arrives I'm momentarily at a loss as to how to fix the silhouette to it. I look around and there's Vern on the other side of the glass pointing, and when I look again I see a tape dispenser mounted to the wall.

I run the target back about halfway to the rear concrete wall. It's ridged, corrugated, and it takes me a slow moment to realize that this is to prevent ricochets. The concrete makes the range cooler than the shop, like a bunker, and it smells, but only faintly, of the Fourth of July, fireworks. And this creeping nostalgia, the insulation of the ear defenders, the odd underground cool, give the experience an air of unreality.

The target jumps about on the wire for a few seconds like a puppet, and I wait until it's still before turning to the gun. Vern has taught me how to load it, flipping out the cylinder and dropping in the shells. It's a six-shooter, but he warned me to put five shots in and leave the chamber under the hammer empty, "to save your toes." The bullets go in very easily and quickly—the whole thing feels well made in a way that very few things do these days—and I slide the cylinder back into the gun. I hold it away from me and down and then slowly raise it. Vern has shown me how to cock the hammer and fire or how to pull the trigger all the way back. He has advised me to keep my trigger finger outside the guard until I'm ready to shoot. I'm frightened of it going off before I'm ready, of seeming dangerous. But once I have it in position cocking it is simple, when I fire my first shot I'm surpr how easy it comes. (Vern is a g teacher.) There's a crack and a s flash from the gun, but the recoil i most playful in the way it bats my h up. I've hit serves that jarred wors look last at the target and see a s neat puncture in the shoulder of my houette. Almost too neat, but for slight tearing of the paper. I fire ag And again and again and again. cause, after all, what else is there do? By my fifth shot I'm not cock but experimenting with pulling trigger back. Two of my shots s tens in the target's chest. With next set I take aim at the head put all five on target. I feel like D Harry or Steve McGarrett. Just Clark.

Beside me as I'm loading again, other shooter reels in his target, un another, and tapes it up. He's grandfatherly, dressed in polyes metallic-blue Sansabelt pants a teal polo shirt. He nods and I nod b He looks like a bowler, and I re that's exactly what this experienc reminding me of, bowling. I'd la at him rather than nod back, t slightly too portentous nod, ex that he has a loaded weapon on counter before him, a tool with wh he could kill me. It occurs to me if he took that into his head the thing stopping him would be the that I might shoot back.

I try to ask myself what this m have meant to Clark, but I can't g The experience isn't inspiring, deadening, mechanical. I feel the p ic rising again, the greed. We need money. I think of my own son, my born son (I wanted to know the not for me the surprise ending) whom I'm doing this, and I wo what might possibly ever drive hi kill me. I know I thought about ki him. We talked about it, about a mination, an abortion. We ha planned on this. I kept thinking s thing would come up—a new j major publication. I had a story one of the slick magazines, and had held it for weeks, months, so my hopes were rising day by da score like that—thousands of dolla could change our lives. I found m putting my imaginative energy no

w work but into visualizing that
ent, the letter in the mail, not in
wn self-addressed envelope but
agazine's embossed one, telling
lah, blah, blah, *delighted*. I didn't
), but I think I'd decided we'd
the baby if I sold the story. When
jection letter ("too tumultu-
came, with that sudden rushing
tability they all have, I couldn't
shaking. My wife, used to rages
signation, was speechless. But lat-
ing in bed, I realized, *how insane*.
e morning we talked it through
and I told my wife I thought we
ld go ahead and she cried and held
nd I felt saved.
the thought that one day in some
d this child might kill me, might
t me in the face, who wants to
gine that? And yet, and yet, when
nk of my own father, there have
. . . moments. If I'd had a gun,
wn how to use one. Oh yes. But
y reasons, anger over a grounding,
using the car, disappointing him.
worth killing for. Not worth going
and buying a gun and laying in
ush for. But if the gun were at
d? Not worth running upstairs for,
haps, not worth crossing the hall
but if it were on the counter (what
fuck would it be doing on the
nter? but just suppose), on the
e, in my hand. I did punch my fa-
once. I'd come in late and he wait-
up, barred the door to my room.
yelled at each other and I raised a
There was a moment when I could
e lowered it, merely threatened,
having made it I couldn't stop. I hit
and he took a step back, out of sur-
, I think. "Do that again," he told
when he'd recovered himself, and
d—bowing to that curious com-
it male desire to make a bad thing
se, to transform an accident, a mis-
ke, into a tragedy, to render our-
es not hapless, not foolish and vain,
heroic, grand, awesome. And he
k the next shot too, and then he
t me unconscious (in fact, he only
led his own fist, and I took a step
k, fell down the stairs, and knocked
self cold—so close is tragedy to
ce—but the first version makes a
ter story). Except if it hadn't been
t, if it had been a gun I'd raised, he
uldn't have had the chance, would
And all over nothing.

He's dead now, my father, and as I
empty the [illegible]
of trauma, my son after him.

Shooting is actually quite [illegible]
bowling. I'm trading [illegible]
I can daydream while doing it. There's
something effortless and [illegible]
seemingly instantaneous bang and the
appearance yards away of a small hole.
I fire another twenty rounds. I move the
target back, forward. I shoot to kill, I
shoot to wound, I shoot from the hip.
I suddenly understand why someone
might rent a machine gun. What I want
most in the world I realize is a moving
target, a more interesting target. The
idea on the range is marksmanship, but
there's no real challenge here. I look
down the barrel of my gun but watch
the shots of the man next to me. He
doesn't seem much better, and I've only
been shooting for twenty minutes. I
watch him cluster his shots in the high-
scoring body of the target—one, two,
three, four. Nothing. And something
about the rhythm, my focus on his tar-
get, makes me swing my gun over and
put a fifth shot into the face of his tar-
get. Perhaps because of the angle I'm firing from, the bullet makes a ragged
hole, tearing loose a strip of paper that
curls slighty, flaps like a tongue. I hold
my breath, horrified. I keep the gun
raised, keep sighting down it. I can't
hear anything from my neighbor be-
hind his screen. Perhaps he's reload-
ing, hasn't noticed. The pause goes on,
and eventually I empty my revolver,
slowly and methodically into my target.
When I'm done and my gun is down
and I'm pushing out the shells, I feel a
heavy tap on my shoulder. It's him.
He's waited for me to empty.

I have some conflict

He mouths something, and I shake
my head, lift an ear cup.

"What the hell was that back there?"
he asks again, gesturing toward the tar-
get without taking his eyes off me. His
hand is huge and mottled red and
white where he [illegible]
gun. His other hand is out of sight.

"Sorry," I tell him, and it sounds as
if I'm speaking in slow motion. "A.
Mrs. Fire?"

He looks at me for a long moment,
waits for my eyes to [illegible]
muzzles of his pupils behind their yel-
low protective goggles. It occurs to me

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NOTES FOR "ELECTRICITY"

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 11. n(at[rev.])o; 12. two mngs.; 13. *; 14. a(TTA[rev.])che; 16. wai(s)t-lines; 18. I-C-I-CL-E; 20. w.-a-y-l-ay; 22. da(int.)y; 24. *; 26. master-mind; 30. whim-per, 32. *; 33. homophone; 34. tor-n.; 35. pets-rood(rev.); 36. dis-Persians (pun).

DOWN: 1. us(her)ed; 2. the-(t)-a; 3. a-bet; 4. C-I-tore (rev.) 5. sta-RR; 6. a-LP-AC-a; 7. zit-I; 9. hidden; 15. homophone; 17. I-mansion*; 19. (rev.); 21. spar-row; 23. T.(read)S.; 25 26. D.(US)T.'s; 27. *; 28. homophone; 29. two mngs.; 31. two mngs.

that they are the exact same sha
my computer screen, and I im
my precious last words drifting a
them, the letters springing into
tence under the blearing cursor: "
dear in the headlights." Finally
nods and says, "All right, then,"
ishes back behind his booth.

I reload, pressing the shells h
letting their snug fit steady me,
wait for him to start firing a
And wait and wait and wait unt
hand begins to tremble, and fin
can't not fire. The gap betv
thought and action is so fine. It's
standing on a cliff, the way the
of falling makes you want to en
tension, take control, jump b
you fall. I felt the death mole, i
like. I felt it burrowing forward
dermining me.

Only when I'm empty do I se
neighbor's target beside me je
nally. He puts five rounds int
head of his target in a tight fist,
draws it toward him, packs up,
leaves. I still have ammo left. U
ished business, like a chore. I
the gun back up and fire round
round after round like hamme
nails.

Sometime in there—after the
wears off and then the elation, an
boredom sets in—I realize there's n
ing to learn here. This won't tel
anything about Clark. And the tho
of continuing failure fills me with
den despair. I put the gun down
moment, afraid of it. I have about
suicidal thought a year, but this is
good time to be having it. And
the moment passes, because I k
with an adrenaline-fueled clarity
killing myself won't make any kin
difference. I know my wife will go
my son will be born. My work w
suddenly be discovered. There'
point. And it's a crushing feel
Knowing that the ultimate gesture
very worst thing you can do, is not
special, a failure of imagination.

I fire five more times, reel in
target, roll it up in a tight tube.

When I return my gun and
Vern gives my credit card a l
look.

"I thought I knew you. You're
teacher from that school. You
on TV." He shakes his head sa
and for a second I think it's a

of contrition, and then he says, "What are you teaching those kids anyway."

I pass behind school on my way home, have to stop, I'm shaking so much. in my bones now, the distant ring- s sudder of the gun. My hands smell wder, my hair, my shirt, and I clam- out of the car so I won't gag. There's ld pack of Marlboro Lights in the box from before my wife got preg- , and I fumble for a cigarette, suck until all I can taste is tobacco te. The storm fence here has been oned with tokens — flowers, cards, toys, hang from the wire. Damp the dew, a little faded already, they e in the breeze, fluttering and twist- against the chain-link as if caught net. I lean on my hood, watching wilight seep up out of the earth to- l the still bright sky.

ave your character change.

What do I teach them? I teach them telling stories is the easiest and lest thing in the world, and among looks of disbelief and confusion e's always one who nods, who gets like the teenage fatalist who asked once, "Because there are only so ny stories, right? Like seven or ething." Seven, or ten, or a dozen, ugh no one can agree what they and there are countless ways of ing them wrong. But the theory s right. A finite number of stories, ch writers try to tell over and over in. So suicide is boring? Then how you make it not boring? How do make it exciting? How do you ke it new? So fresh, so vital, so orig- l, that it speaks to an audience?

Before the light fades completely, I up to the fence to read the mes- es. The first moves me close to tears, I sag against the wire. It's such a ef. I read another and another, hun- y, but by the time I've read a dozen eyes are dry as stone. I snatch at them, cking them down, the ribbon and ored wool they dangle from gouging ough the soft card. Taken together y're clichéd, mawkish, misspelled. ere are hundreds of them stretching ty, fifty yards in each direction, as far can see in the gloom, like so much er swept here by the wind. And I nt to tear them all down, I want to rip m to shreds. Every awful word. ■

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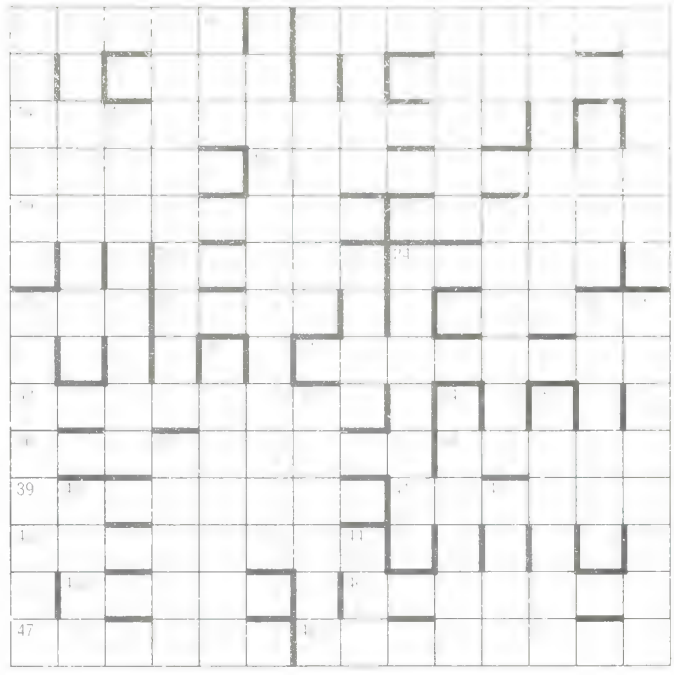
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Theme and Variations (Revisited)

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Stephen Sondheim)



Five unclued entries are related in a certain way. Each of them is then related to two "Variations" — two more unclued entries related in a different way. For example, if the related entries were SLIP and DIP, the variations might be SLIPSHOD and SLIPPERY, and DIP (pep) and DIPSHIT (pet).

Clued answers include seven proper names; 41A and 40D are uncommon words. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 88.

ACROSS

1 Fast living (5)
6. Universities set a course retroactively, following a middle-grade top score (8)
12. She inspired certain writers in 1510! (4)
13. New article with pin-holder from Old Malaysia (6)
14 *Variation on Theme-word C* (6, 5)
17 Mutt with cattail on the front would be something awesome (5)
18. *Theme-word A* (9)
19 I fear the new animated Pooh has been traveling around (8)
20. Setting up classes in writing (6)
22. Falling maple leaves—Enough! (5)
24. *Theme-word B* (5)
25 Production of *Worms* doesn't open — I'll be kinda [illegible] (3)
26. Finally destroy an old city (4)
27. Little snip involved in grant gets change in court (4)
31. *Variation on Theme-word D* (8)
32. Laughably silly, to a supporter of the king (8)
36. Attentive but not well guarded (9)
38. Being out of one's class, like a funny pirate? (3)
39. IRT train wrecks—Bother! (8)
41. Sea turtle direly in need of relocation (6)
43. *Variation on Theme-word B* (5)
45. He went to 48A in Accord (5)
46 Resort erred badly accepting gold (7)
47. Spooks in Datsun's differential (6)
48. *Theme-word E* (8)

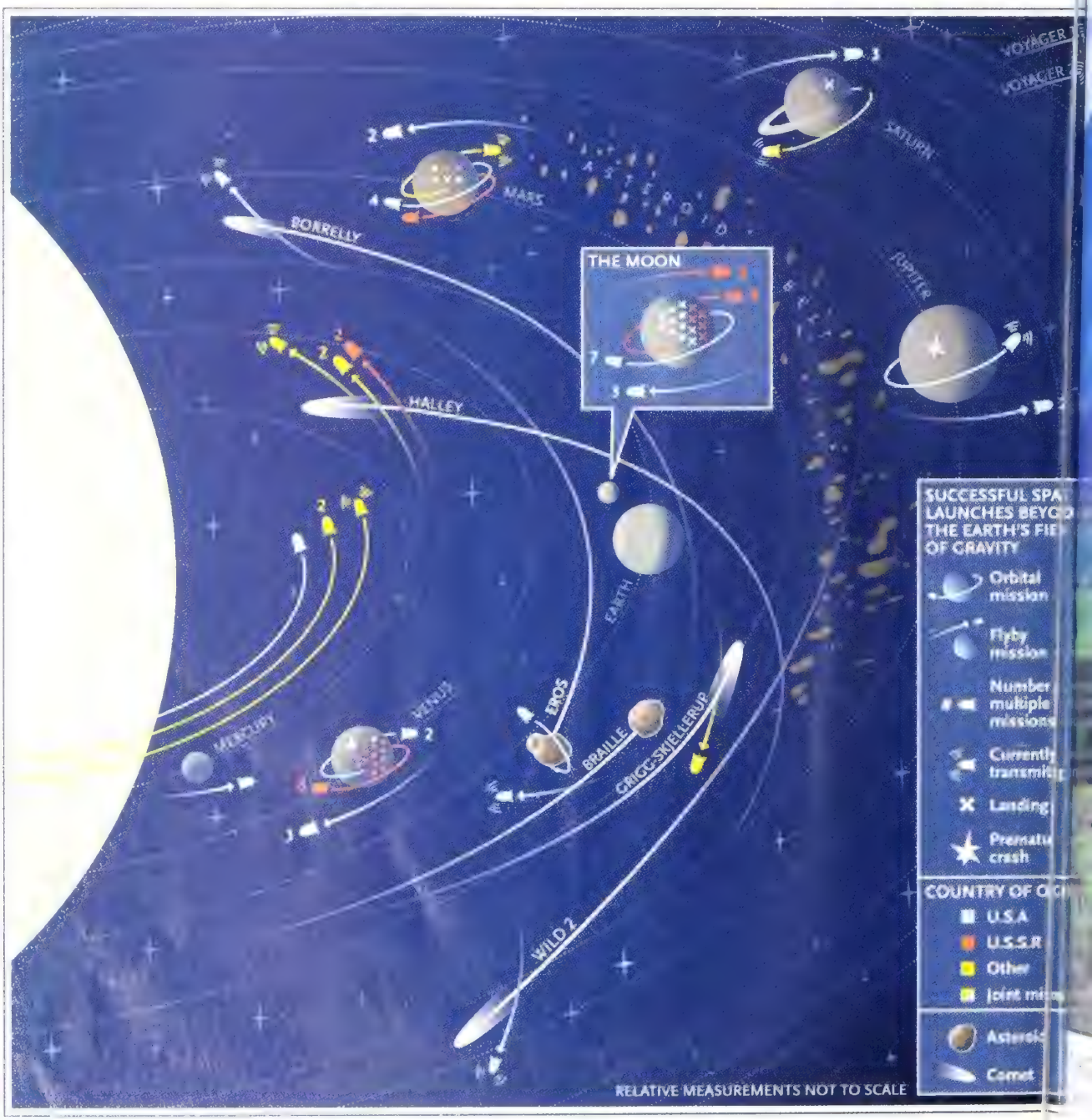
DOWN

1. *Theme-word D* (6)
2. It covers the product of mare and bull (8)
3 *Variation on Theme-word D* (6)
4 Thousand and one *Time* articles in one place (3)
5 *Variation on Theme-word A* (11)
6 With graciousness, with competence, with a very [illegible] (7)
7 *Variation on Theme-word E* (4, 4)
8. Is correct French [illegible] (3)
9 *Time* Magazine [illegible] (3)
10. *Variation on Theme-word A* (7)
11 Signs of maturity appearing when you don't start calls on your beeper (6)
15. [illegible] (8)
16. Staff times a cat (4)
21 In music, a little half-note range (6)
23 Go out with your old girlfriend, having a thing (4)
24 *Variation on Theme-word B* (7)
25 Illegal diet mill appearing at the wrong moment (5)
28 Sign in a dictionary made like a pig (6)
29. Variation on Theme-word [illegible] (4)
30 Eggs [illegible] sandwich at one (7)
33 Entrance [illegible] (3)
34 Reserved base, said to be a Civil War site (6)
35 City that can easily be looted (6)
37 Giant ripple is given a name (5)
40. [illegible] (4)
42 [illegible] (4)
44 Placing no limits on Ostric's title (3)

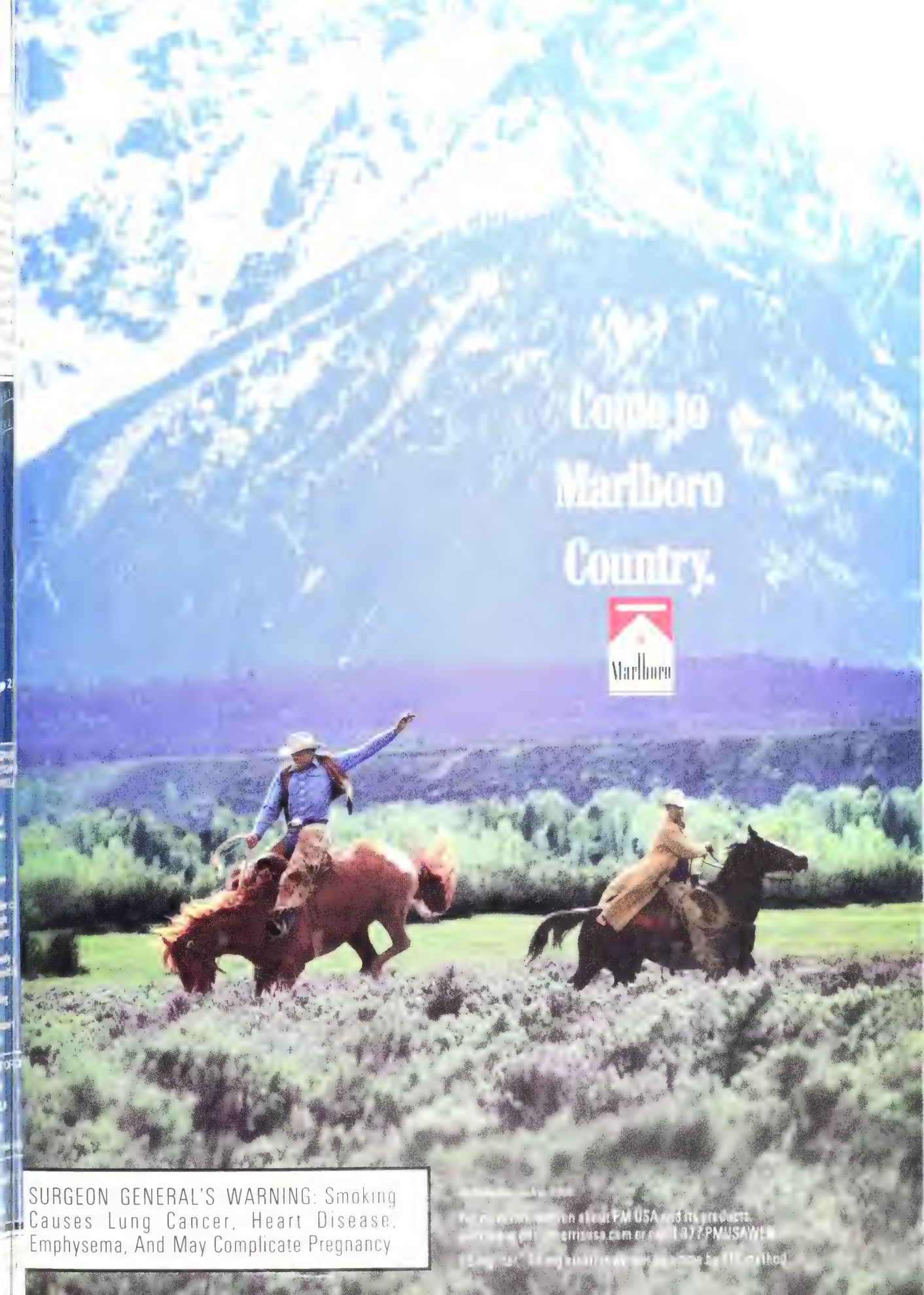
Contest Rules: Send completed diagram [illegible] way, New York, N.Y. 10012. If you [illegible] by January 10. Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at [illegible] ners' names will be printed in the March issue. [illegible] sette, Alban Schubert and Lyman Sanders. [illegible]

2001: ARE WE SCI-FI YET?

Since 1959, when the Soviet Union's Luna 1 became the first spacecraft to escape Earth's gravity, eighty-three missions have [illegible] the same, generating a wealth of images and data. Although the last decade saw many fewer successful launches than the 1960s, [illegible] observational range has expanded to the sun and every planet but Pluto, and increasingly includes sophisticated rendezvous [illegible] visiting asteroids and comets. The most distant vessel still transmitting—1977's Voyager 1—has long since passed Neptune [illegible] estimated to have traveled more than 6 billion miles from Earth by now. Almost nine in ten of the missions since 1980, however, hav[illegible] geted destinations closer to home, and the moon and Venus—the American and Soviet outposts in the Cold War's space race—rema[illegible] spacecraft most frequently visited. Although the Cold War's end, coupled with other nations' burgeoning (and less geopolitically focused) [illegible] programs, might have presaged a wider range of exploration, the growth in satellite, shuttle, and space-station technology—along wit[illegible] eral recent botched Mars missions—has dampened interest in new larger-scale endeavors. And NASA's budget has dropped from [illegible] of 5.5 percent of federal outlays in 1966 to less than one percent today. Compared with the epic travels imagined in *2001: A Space Od[illegible]* our current journeys are for the most part smaller, their tasks more quotidian, and the computers that run them a lot more cooperat[illegible]



Map by XPLANE.com, © 2000. Based on dat[illegible]
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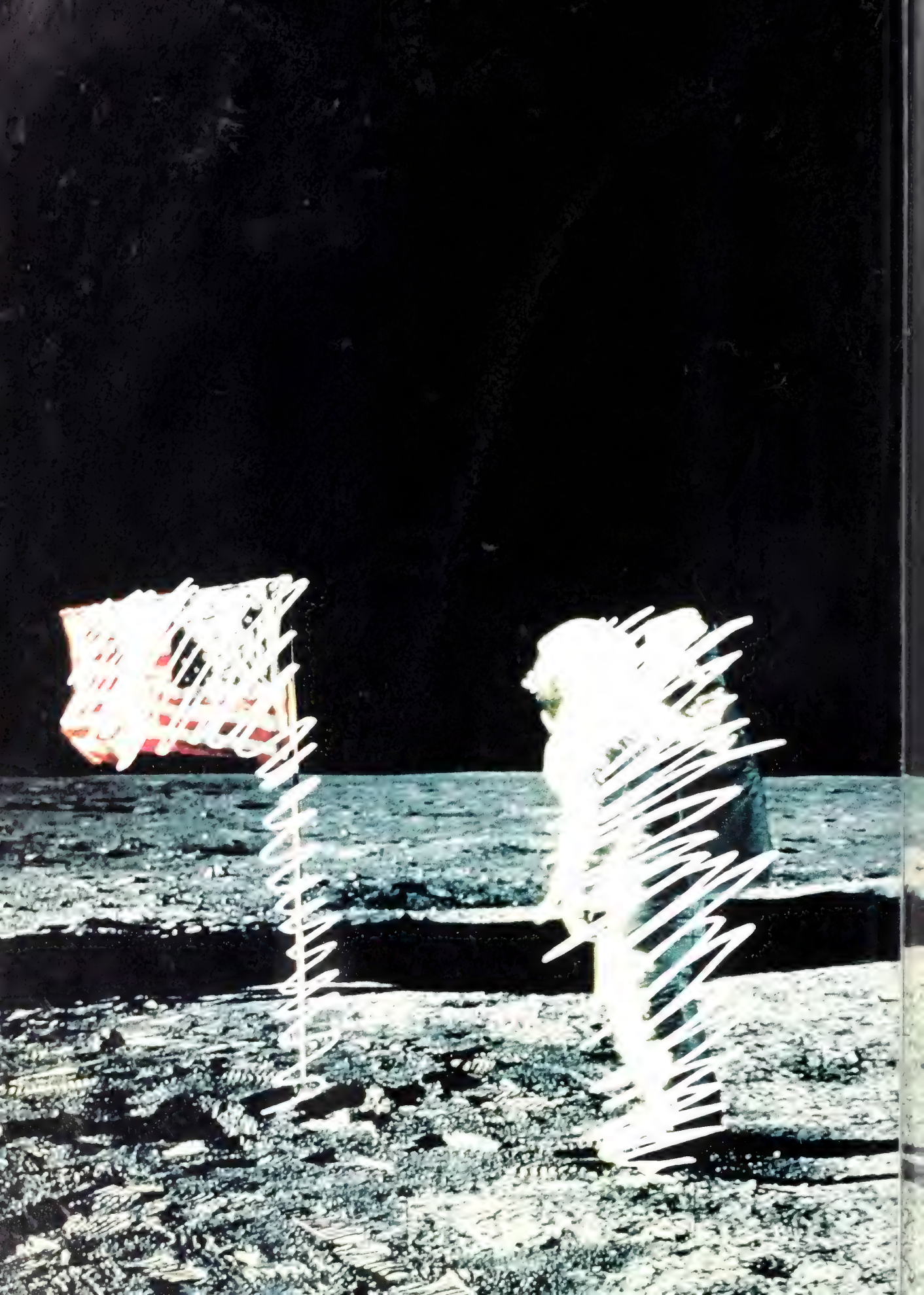
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HARPER'S

LETTERS

Forty Acres and an SUV

Like the discarded television that sat in my basement, America operates only in black and white. This color line remains because of three hundred years of de jure and de facto slavery. As the participants in "Making the Case for Racial Reparations" [November 2000] point out, slavery did not end with the Civil War. America (meaning the government and majority community) decided to live modified and to remove slavery and its echo.

But the slave is no less bound to the master than the master is bound to the slave. The majority community lives in fear of what equal access to success might mean to those inside and outside the Establishment. Until America can erase the color line, there will be friction among all who live here.

"Black reparations," as legal scholar Robert Westley has said, "should be considered a prerequisite to civil equality." But a paycheck, forty acres, and an SUV may not do themselves will not create civil equality.

Part of the goal in seeking reparations is to educate America and the rest of the world about what Forum participant Alexander Pires called "the most unacknowledged story in America's history." People must be made aware that black Americans, like the Jews and Japanese who continue to receive reparations for injustices perpetrated during World War II, suffer from the nation's failure to acknowledge past injustices. In addition, reparations ought to include increased access to education for blacks, young and old. We need to implement institutions and programs that will allow black America to become economically independent.

Some people will argue: "I never owned a slave. I never oppressed anyone. Why should I have to pay?" But reparations are an investment for a better future. The livelihood of all Americans is dependent on an improved social condition, one in which civil equality exists.

Does America owe a debt to descendants of its slaves? The bricks and mortar of our nation's capital, whose very stones were laid by slaves, send a resounding yes. The real question is: When will America acknowledge the debt it owes and take action? Until we have adequately answered this question, the story of our nation will continue to unfold in black and white.

Iohnnie Cochran
Los Angeles

The lawyers in the November Forum ignored several reasons why reparations should not be paid:

The slaves who survived the treacherous transatlantic journey generally fared far better than the mass of individuals left behind who were victims of brutal black slave owners in Africa.

Money for reparations would come from taxpayers who had nothing to do with slavery—whose own ancestors came to America long after slavery was abolished. Should these individuals be held accountable for the horrors suffered by the slaves in America

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Reparations paid to Japanese Americans do not set a precedent for payments to the descendants of slaves. Those reparations went to actual living victims of an injustice, the Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during World War II. The actual victims of slavery are long dead.

If reparations for all treatment committed many generations ago are paid to blacks, will the Irish be the next to demand payment? Where will it stop? Practically every group in America suffered some sort of historical wrong. Our nation is far better off when we seek fair treatment for all.

Izola Forster
Vice Presidential Candidate
Reform Party
Venice, Calif.

The argument presented by Lord Gifford's panel of lawyers are based on bad history. In the 1850s, the encouraged defenders of southern slavery. George Fitzhugh pointed out that all the world was on slavery of one kind or another. He observed that the critics of southern slavery, such as Northerners and Englishmen, had their own system of slavery, based on monopoly over the means of production and preventing the working class with a choice of low wages or starvation. Child labor in 19th-century factories was much more savage than anything on a plantation in the American South. If African-Americans are entitled to reparations, then so are about 95 percent of the population.

Andrew D. Todd
Morgantown, W.Va.

Unmarked descendants of Europeans and the Caribbean [illegible] are left with an ontological void where our African ancestors [illegible] while the descendants of our former masters have climbed atop our past, present, and future to be the lords and ladies of the world.

Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan, mentioned by the Forum's lawyers, are prime examples of Africans [illegible]. They operate under the aegis of rich white men, and the language of their spheres of [illegible] of slavery: players are owned, players are bought, players are traded. The





Rare [illegible] develops an ethereal aroma, mellows.

with ORANGEY.



GLENMORANGIE
SINGLE HIGHLAND MALT SCOTCH WHISKY

[illegible Chuck D] reached [illegible] past [illegible] cotton in mother's womb.

Forget about the apology. When have we ever been told [illegible] with [illegible] masters?

[illegible]
Vancouver, B.C.

Silverstein's article [illegible] in America [illegible] thousands of African Americans currently serving lengthy prison sentences for nonviolent offenses [illegible] is a centerpiece of the merciless racist criminal-justice policies that drive America's current [illegible] mass [illegible].

The [illegible] of these policies is the [illegible] drugs. Discriminatory in its targeting, arrest, and prosecution of people of color and the poor, this de facto war has devastated an entire generation of young black men. The drug war's parallels to slavery before abolition and indentured servitude under Jim Crow are startling. Those affected are removed from their communities, stripped of their right to vote, given few educational opportunities, and put to work for a prison/industrial complex that generates billions of [illegible] in revenue for government and corporations. Until the United States reforms its deeply flawed criminal-justice system, we cannot say we have abolished the criminal practice of "indentured servitude."

[illegible]
New York City

Across the country most white Americans are vehemently against reparations of any sort. You mention mere apology, and their shorts get all knotted. But consider this:

[illegible] passed the Homestead Act, granting a family 160 acres [illegible] after five years. More than 80 million acres of land were given away to some 600,000 white [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

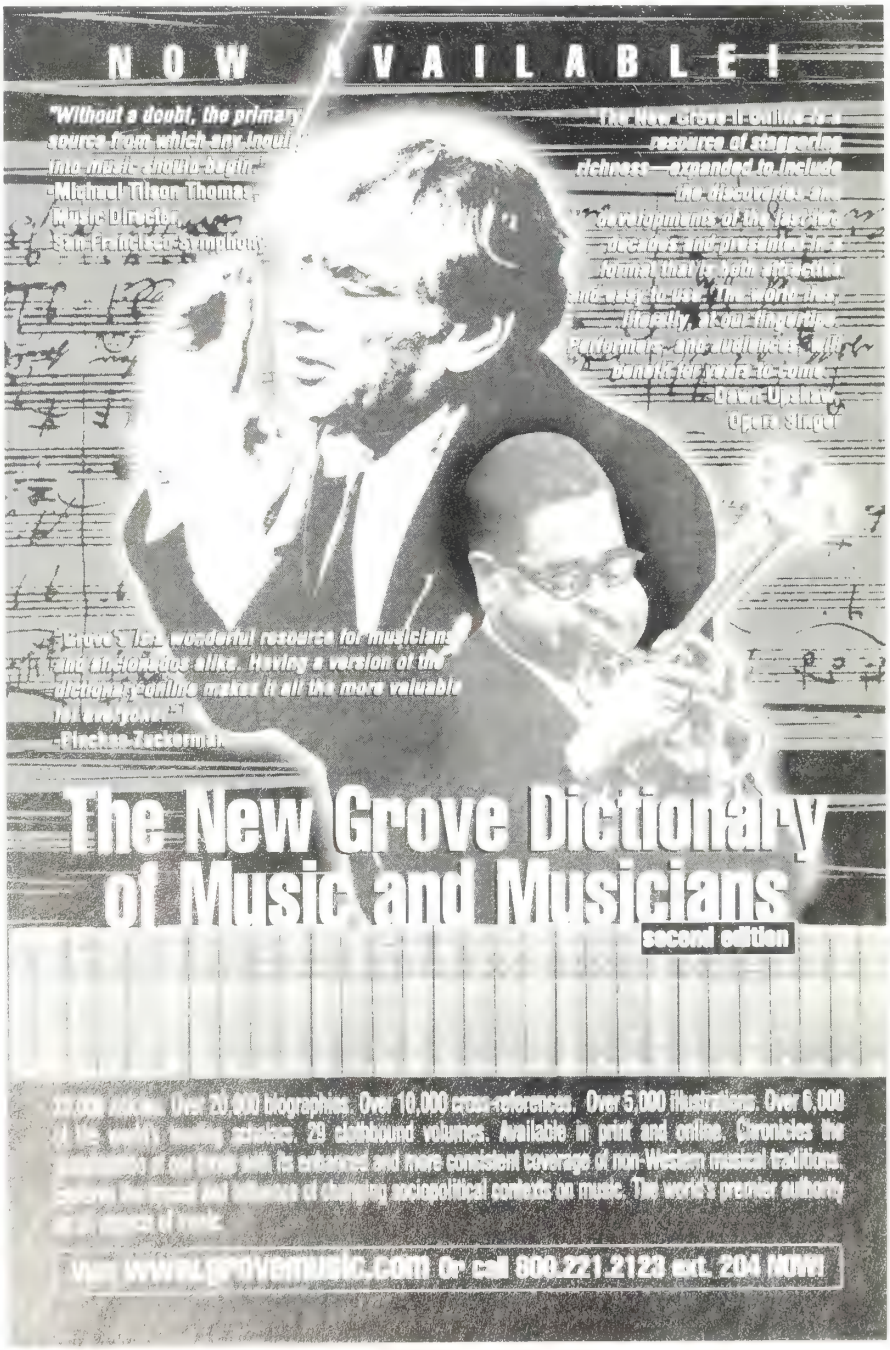
and to the next year's operations
nses, including program expense
Silverstein falsely claims that our
"tax documents" indicate that, of our
$0.8 million in educational spending,
"4 million went to solicitations" and
another $2.4 million paid for stamps."
The $4 million figure reflects the cost
the educational component of our
ommunications. Unless one takes the
osition that none of our communica-
on with donors has any educational
alue (a particularly extreme position
r Silverstein, who makes a living com-
unicating in writing), some portion of
he cost of communications should be
located to educational expenses.
enerally accepted accounting prin-
ples and the tax code recognize this
oint.) The $4 million figure includes
share of the postage cost of our donor
ommunications. There isn't another
$2.4 million . . . for stamps," as Silver-
ein reports. This all may seem a bit
omplicated, but we would have been
appy to explain it to *Harper's*, had
he magazine bothered to call us.

Silverstein has no clue about the
epth and breadth of the Center's
work, and reading his article, one
ould never know that litigation
gainst white-supremacist groups is but
ne facet of it. One would never know
hat we just settled a case that will re-
orm Alabama's system for delivering
ental health care to prisoners; that
e have been instrumental in forcing
ouisiana to reform its juvenile jus-
ice system; that we're working on be-
alf of poor people who are in danger
of being forced from their homes in
he name of urban renewal; that we're
itigating a major civil rights case be-
ore the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf
of persons who can't speak English; or
hat we're launching a major voting-
ights initiative. Silverstein says that
e shy away from anything "contro-
ersial." But the last time we checked,
entally ill prisoners, juvenile delin-
quents, people in public housing, and
those who can't speak English weren't
winning any popularity contests.

Joseph J. Levin Jr., President
Southern Poverty Law Center
Montgomery, Ala.

Ken Silverstein responds

Whenever Morris Dees and the
Southern Poverty Law Center are



NOTEBOOK

Civics lesson

By Lewis H. Lapham

[illegible] people [illegible] unalienable, indefeasible, divine right to that most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge, I mean of the characters and conduct of their rulers.

John Adams

During the month when the presidential election was still a work in progress, the television footage from Washington and Tallahassee provided hourly updates of Adams's "most dreaded and envied kind of knowledge," and for nearly forty days and forty nights we had a chance to see what we mean by the phrases "the rule of law" and "democratic self-government." Opinions differed as to whether the course of instruction was worth the harm done to our notion of free and fair elections, but in many years to come I expect to be reading books explaining how and why it came to pass that the Supreme Court appointed George W. Bush to the office of president.

Authors in liberal jurisdictions undoubtedly will cite passages from the Harvard civics lessons as the premise for treatises on the fall of the American empire or the ruin of the American republic. Apostles of the conservative revelation conceivably will cite the same testimony as preface to five-volume [illegible] America's moral reawakening. My own view is more haphazard and less apocalyptic—a sequence of preliminary observations rather than the components of a theory [illegible]

When the Florida ballot on November 8 failed to find in favor of either candidate, the news media swarmed to the occasion with so many cameras and talking heads that the shape of the [illegible] dead buffalo under a veil of shrieking crows. At every hour of the day and night the all but ceaseless commentary tended to obscure rather than illuminate the text, and I knew that I was likely to forget what I was being told unless I kept a fairly extensive set of notes. I didn't follow all the lines of all the legal maneuvers. Every motion filed by both parties to the dispute proceeded from the assumption that if all the votes cast in Florida somehow could be accurately counted, Vice President Al Gore probably would win the election, and I was content to stipulate what was attested to by the lack of argument on the point. Why else did the Republicans seek to stop, impede, indefinitely postpone, any revisiting of the ballots? They never tired of accusing the Democrats of trying to steal the election ("Chad Molesters!" "Commanders in Thief!"), but it was their own behavior that was more obviously suspect, hurrying to get the votes across the border and out of state before somebody searched their luggage.

Mostly I was interested in traits of character, and on reviewing my own brief I notice that I weighted the emphasis toward the furious confusion in the minds of the Republicans-who-would-be-king. I could understand their wanting to carry Mr. Bush in triumph to the White House (as if he were the family silver or a baseball signed by Babe Ruth), and I could appreciate their sense of urgency and haste. But why were they always enraged? They controlled almost all of the political machinery in Florida (the legislature, the governor's office, the state government, the Cuban diaspora), and yet they imagined themselves unfairly persecuted by a jealous god and wicked trolls. What was it to which they believed themselves entitled, and how did they arrive at the certain knowledge of their own virtue?

I never came up with clear answers to the questions, but now that the country has been placed in the care of Mr. Bush's tutors, I expect that I'll be returning to them at frequent intervals over the next four years, and if I'm at a loss to understand a point of national policy—why we're at war with China, or what happened to the forests in Oregon—I can recall the sight of James A. Baker III on the evening of November 21, angrily informing a press conference in Tallahassee that the Florida Supreme Court had committed what he construed to be the crime of lese majesty. The court had handed down a decision of which Mr. Baker disapproved—to permit the recounting, by hand, of undervoted ballots in three Florida counties—and therefore, in Mr. Baker's view, the decision was null and void. A ruling by "judicial fiat," he said; insolent and not to be endured. The expression in his face—pinched, vengeful, and mean—I could assign to a choleric temperament or a display of tactical emotion on the part of a clever bully. What surprised me was the strength of his conviction. The man apparently believed what he was saying, a rich lawyer inveighing against the rule of law, inciting the Florida legislature to overturn (by a fiat more to Mr. Baker's liking) the judgment of the court. Watching him read his statement, I understood that he conceived of the law as a nuisance, an idiot tangle of "legalistic language, superfluous and tiresome, that mostly served as a recourse for people too poor or too weak to buy what they wished or do as they pleased.

What frightened Mr. Baker was the prospect of the country's democratic

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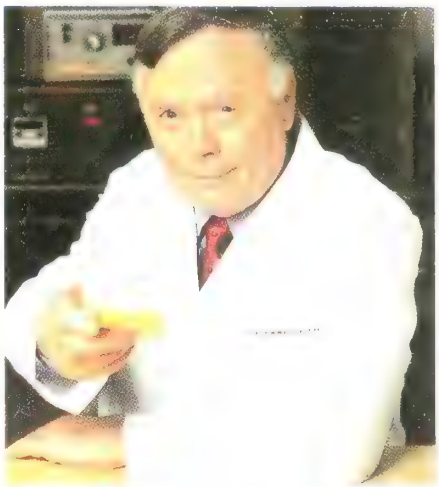
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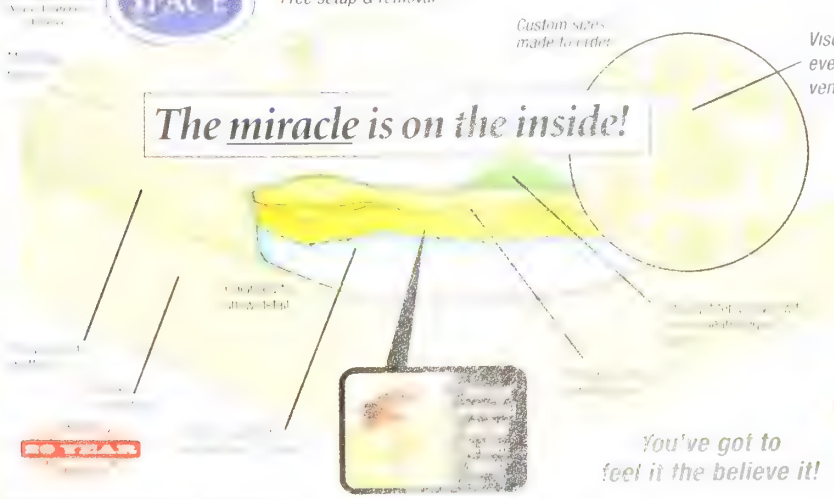
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institution falling into the hands of the wrong people — i.e., anybody unpersuaded by the holy writ of orthodox Republicanism — and so he perceived the uses of political power as primarily defensive. The laws were forms of crowd control, meant to inhibit, punish, and restrict. Like Dick Cheney (saying dismissively to an impertinent newspaper reporter, "You've had your [illegible]"), Secretary Harris, the Florida secretary of state (refusing to accept the revised tally from Palm Beach County because the paperwork was not correct in every detail), or the supreme [illegible] defending the presumptuous continuation of the Florida [illegible], the Republican conscience interpreted the power of government not as creative agency or contractual [illegible] but as the power to suppress and deny — the power of the [illegible], the truffle judge, the police sergeant.

The secret truth proclaimed through clenched teeth by Mr. Baker in Tallahassee guided the Republican operatives in Florida to a strategy summed up in the phrase "Unless we win, it's illegal." Quick to impugn the character and motives of their opponents, they seldom missed the chance for malicious [illegible]. A court that ruled in favor of Governor Bush was a court deserving of compliance and respect; a court that ruled otherwise was a treasonous court, renegade and corrupt. As with the courts, so also with judges, town clerks, members of county canvassing boards. [illegible] with Governor Bush or the prima facie righteousness of the Republican cause deserved the name of "patriot." Democrats were "partisan hacks," by definition crooked and self [illegible] the people's will [illegible] and [illegible] the record. The feverish rhetoric shows up in my notes both as paraphrase and [illegible] broadly hinting at likely instances of [illegible] man Tom DeLay or Senator Trent Lott threatening "unelected judges" with [illegible].

Bush, frowning darkly in far-off Texas, was prompted to say that he didn't think it was right (no sir, not right at all) for an election to be "usurped."

The voices of Republican alarm in the print and television media upgraded the rhetoric to the pitch of near hysteria. *The Wall Street Journal*'s lead editorial accused the Democrats of attempting a "coup d'état." Excited columnists elsewhere on the page likened Al Gore to Adolf Hitler and Al Capone; every Democratic legal argument was "preposterous" or "illegitimate," every filing of a motion on Mr. Gore's behalf "an unfolding miscarriage of justice." When Jesse Jackson addressed a crowd in Palm Beach County, the paper discerned the threat of an organized putsch by rabble-rousing thugs. When a mob of Republican Party functionaries (several of them hired by Congressman DeLay) staged a riot in Miami-Dade County, the paper saw a quorum of true and loyal Americans standing up for free speech and the rights of man.

National Review on December 4 published the confession of Jay Nordlinger, one of its New York editors, who had taken a temporary leave of absence to write speeches for the Bush campaign and who had suffered dreadful torment on election night in Austin. Nordlinger told the story of how he had gone to bed "full of fear" and grim foreboding, certain that he would awaken to the news of Mr. Gore's accession to the White House. He knew that something bad was bound to happen because Democrats were born cheats and instinctive liars and therefore "better at politics than we are . . . better at fraud," unscrupulous people "ten feet tall," just like the Russians during the Cold War.

Equally distraught writers marked up other pages in the magazine with the entire catechism of Republican fear and loathing. A columnist by the name of Mark Steyn found the goodness of the American heart in the inland states colored red on November's electoral map; the color blue indicated the "debauched dystopias" on the nation's coastlines "that the rest of us can visit for wild weekends every now and again before returning to our homes in solid, enduring, conservative . . . America." Deeply disturbed by the unexpectedly large number of voters who had preferred the Democratic candidate, Steyn asked himself the question, "Who *are* these people?" and fortunately discovered, much to his relief, that most of them were misfits, criminals, and foreigners — "aliens Al Gore strong-armed the INS into hustling through the naturalization process without background checks," also the friends of Al Sharpton and Alec Baldwin, senile pensioners rounded up from nursing homes, "gay scoutmasters," and "partial-birth-abortion fetishists," "the Palm Beach chapter of Jews for Buchanan."

The poisonous language dribbling out of the mouths of people who as recently as last summer had been talking about restoring "civility" to the American political discussion somehow seemed to me less surprising than the paranoid romance from which the plaintiffs apparently derived the casus belli for their imbecile remonstrance. They tell themselves a fairy tale, engaged in deadly combat with they know not what:

> The Vice President of the United States receives a plurality of the popular vote and the Republican fanatics portray him as a jack-booted tyrant seizing a Latin American army or a Bulgarian radio station.

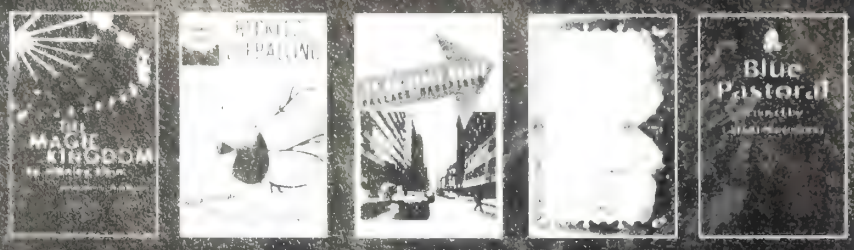
> The Clinton Administration for eight years bestows on the country's corporate clients the blessings of the China Trade Bill, repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act, low-cost labor, high stock-market prices, lenient interpretation of the anti-trust laws, reduced welfare payments to the poor, and in the minds of Rupert Murdoch's editorial writers the Clinton Administration is a sinister cabal sacrificing the temple of Mammon.

> The nation enjoys the comforts of a timid and predominantly conservative news media (the four television networks and most of the cable channels — Time Warner, *USA Today*, nine of ten radio talk stations, etc., etc.), and on the torchcards of Kewpie doll anchorpersons earning upward of $2 million a year the fierce polemicists at The Heritage Foundation stamp the labels "Left wing!" "Liberal!" "Anarchist!"

Maybe I was laboring under an ill-
jammed hero, but I didn't find the
me sort of stupidity on the Demo-
ratic side of the dispute. Not that
e Democrats didn't reserve their con-
itutional right to unctuous statement,
nk hypocrisy, and bitter diatribe.
Whenever possible they presented their
wn interest as synonymous with "the will
the people," and certainly they were
swift as the Republicans to reverse
heir prior positions with respect to
ates' rights and the authority of the
urts, but they seemed to know the
fference between what was said and
hat was meant. More at ease in the
mpany of their own cynicism, they
idn't mistake their opponents for the
iends of Darth Vadar or senior con-
ultants to the Antichrist. Yes, poli-
ics was about the grasp for power,
ometimes by any means available and
often not a pretty sight, but where else
uld one find the weapons control or
he milk subsidy if not in the legislative
ame of three-card monte?

The Republican visionaries frown
n ambiguity—as subjective and im-
perfect as a dimpled chad—and, like
he long-lost legions of the 1960's coun-
erculture, they imagine themselves
peakers of a higher truth at odds with a
world they never made. They belong to
he party of transcendence, captivated
y the beauty of ideological abstrac-
tion and contemptuous of low-born
astorical fact, always being confront-
ed by monsters and apparitions instead
of by the ordinary interests and desires
of other human beings. The political
zealots of the 1960's tended to appear on
the ideological left, allied with the
promise of a utopian future. The Re-
publican risorgimento of the 1980s re-
located the good news in the memory
of an arcadian American past where
John Wayne and Ronald Reagan rode
together at the head of the wagon trains
moving west into the California sunset.
The scouts and trail bosses who served
as Reagan's economic, spiritual, and
foreign-policy advisers (many of them
now attached to President Bush the
Younger) haven't brooked the insult
of a new idea in twenty years, which
possibly is why I could never quite tie
the frenzied Republican commentary
with the discussion of the election
among people who weren't speaking
to a camera.

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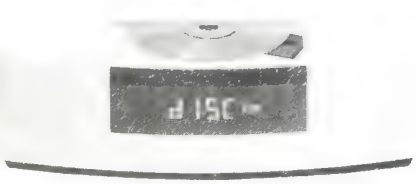
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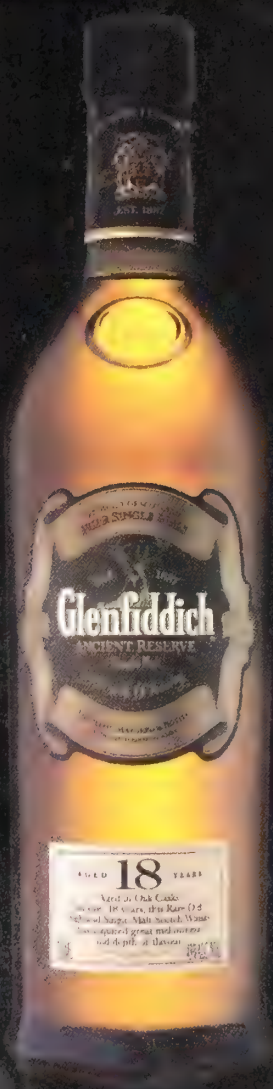
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FAMILY OWNED AND DOMINATED SINCE 1887

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Remarking on the turn of events in Florida over the span of five weeks with a fairly large number of people in New York and Washington (on the telephone, at dinner parties and subway stops, waiting in line at an airport or a movie theater), I seldom came across the rancorous tones of voice that showed up in the news media. Unless bound to party doctrine or the hope of appointment in a Bush or a Gore administration, the respondents stood willing to grant either candidate an unclouded title to the White House. For the most part they saw the dispute as a political quarrel rather than as a constitutional crisis, and they didn't much care which of the two sides won the game of capture the flag. Their good humor I sometimes could attribute to their fair-mindedness and forbearance, at other times to a lack of interest in what's become of a national politic given over to politicians who fancy themselves as born-again aristocrats and biblical prophets. When listening to Trent Lott or reading *The Wall Street Journal*, I was reminded of Kenneth Starr looking for a scarlet letter somewhere on the person of Monica Lewinsky and the road-show Savonarolas in Congress crying down the wrath of Heaven on President Clinton's penis.

But then I remembered what I'd seen on the morning of December 9 at the public library in Tallahassee—judges and county officials doing their best to come up with an honest count and a fair judgment of the ballots ignored by a machine. They were keeping faith with the idea of the country's democratic institutions in the hands of a democratic people, and although mocked by Mr. Baker and ordered by the Supreme Court to cease and desist, they sifted through the boxes of computer cards as deliberately as if they were examining a mortgage contract, and I was proud of what I took to be their impartiality and seriousness of intent.

It my bias had been dormant on the morning of November 8, by December 12, when the Supreme Court ushered Mr. Bush into the White House I could recognize it not as a preference for Al Gore and the Democrats but as opposition to the parties of transcendence and a fear of fools armed with the bright swords of shining ideology.

HARPER'S INDEX

Chance that a democratic national election [illegible] : 1 in 5

Chance that an election held in 1999 had such problems : 1 in 5 (see p. 23)

Ratio of the insurance industry's U.S. political [illegible]

Rank of the Democratic Party and Nike, respectively [illegible] : 1, 2

Rank of the Republican Party : 6

Average number of brand name items requested per [illegible] : 14

Weeks that a Massachusetts school prohibited a boy from cross-dressing last fall before a judge overturned the ban : 13

Number of Hooters girls who visited a teenage leukemia patient in a Philadelphia hospital last fall at his request : 5

Estimated number of minors held in U.S. prisons in 1995 [illegible] : 7,400

Number of Floridian ex-convicts denied the right to vote [illegible] : 343,000

Number of times a Floridian can be convicted of DUI before the infraction becomes a felony : 3

Minimum number of limo rides illegally charged to U.S. Postal Service [illegible] : 1,000

Pages of documents related to racial profiling by New Jersey State Police [illegible] : 7

Pages of Haitian government documents that the United States [illegible] in 1994 : 10

Number of years after fleeing Haiti in 1995 that death-squad leader Toto Constant was selling real estate in New York City : 5

Estimated amount of Colombian drug money laundered each year via purchases of U.S. goods and services : $3,000,000,000

Amount this represents as a percentage of U.S. military aid pledged to Colombia last year : 578

Estimated percentage of U.S. Army troops deployed in Bosnia [illegible] : 25

Year in which Colin Powell complained, "I'm running out of villains. I'm down to [illegible]" : 1991

Year in which the maker of genetically engineered StarLink corn [illegible] : 1995

Estimated percentage of the U.S. corn supply now contaminated with it : 20

Ratio of the number of people who died of famine in North Korea since 1995 to the entire population of the capital : 1:3

Minimum annual "baby bonus" that the government of Singapore pays couples who have a second child : $500

Maximum number of people who may legally congregate [illegible] : 5

Number of poets scheduled to attend China's 1st conference in Qilian this year before the government banned it : 50

Number of "prefectures . . . east of the mountains . . . growing nothing but thorns," according to poet Tu Fu : 200

Percentage change since 1987 in the jellyfish population off Louisiana's coast : +400

Chances that an Alabama voter voted against legalizing marriage between blacks and whites last November : 2 in 5

Chances that a young black man living in Los Angeles's Watts neighborhood is unemployed or in prison : 7 in 10

Number of Catholics who received penance at a weekend-long "confessa-thon" held in Washington, D.C., last fall : 22,000

Percentage change in the annual number of [illegible] since 1985 : -97

Percentage of doctors at a New York City hospital who report often not knowing the cost of the drugs they prescribe : 80

Chance that [illegible] : 1 in 5

Score shouted by Justice Antonin Scalia at a Washington, D.C., tennis court in 1998 before claiming victory : "5-4!"

Percentage of women who chose Al Gore [illegible] : 4

[illegible] : 44

Rank of assertiveness among qualities the American Psychological Association cites as most common to great presidents : 6

[illegible] : 1

Number of articles published since 1998 containing the words "George W. Bush" and "aura of inevitability" : 350

Lyons, Oklahoma [illegible]

37 things a writer can do to avoid writing.

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READINGS

[Essay]

BARBED WIRE

From an essay by [illegible] *in the latest issue of the* London Review of Books

Mark out, on the two-dimensional surface of the earth, lines across which no movement is allowed, and you have one of the key themes of history. Draw a closed line preventing movement from outside to inside the line, and you define landed property. Draw the same line preventing movement from inside the line to outside, and you define compulsory confinement. Draw an open line preventing movement in either direction, and you define a border. Topological structures of this kind range from absolute barriers that make movement across them physically impossible, through to symbolic lines whose function is to make movement inconvenient and therefore undesirable, to wholly symbolic definitions of limits, respected only because that's how we've agreed [illegible] conventional consensus works. Even a symbolic definition of space, however, depends on the possibility of force being used in defense of spatial bounds, if only as a last resort. [illegible] in the history of the present [illegible] force in its most literal sense: [illegible] sure applied to [illegible] tory must [illegible] infliction of pain.

In the 1870s, with the [illegible] buffalo and the American [illegible] order emerged on the plains of the American West. Instead of herds of wild buffalo, semi-feral Texas longhorn cows now roamed the plains—descendants of the cows originally brought to America by the Spanish colonizers. Remarkably self-sufficient, the longhorn cow was not wholly unlike the buffalo it replaced.

The human relationship with cows, however, was much more one-sided than that with buffalo had been, if only because the organization and technology of capitalist America made it possible to move animals around on a massive scale. Two problems thus arose: how could you farm the land while managing large herds of animals, and, more fundamentally, how could you keep those herds under control at all times? There [illegible] protect [illegible] the independence of movement that the buffalo had had. Hunters and [illegible] predicated borders [illegible] the moral that [illegible] them.

In 1861 a ten-year-old named Adrian Latta [illegible] plowed the [illegible] of his family's fences to prevent hogs from coming onto their land. "The hogs [illegible] would not [illegible] the fence," he noted. "However, the barbs had the desired effect as the owner saw his hogs were getting terribly marked and kept them at home." In 1873, Henry Rose, an Illinois farmer, thought of a new way to control [illegible] He [illegible] wrapped [illegible] head so that whenever the animal tried to squeeze through a narrow gap in a fence it [illegible] Once [illegible] woke [illegible] the cow learned not to go near the

fence. Other farmers conducted similar trials.

By 1874 [illegible] patents had been registered, and by 1880 something like 50,000 miles of barbed-wire fence were in place. Marketing wasn't difficult, and some distributors had [illegible] wagons of showing what their product could do. At an exhibition in San Antonio in 1876, John Gates sealed off part of the town's central plaza with barbed-wire fencing and packed it with dozens of fierce-looking longhorn steers. When the animals charged the fence, the pain of the metal tearing into their flesh first made them even more angry, causing them to charge again, only to be wounded again, and at last to back away, having finally learned that the fence was best avoided.

Barbed wire, it seemed, could stop animals, no matter how many, no matter how desperate they were. At first, manufacturers, anxious that ordinary barbs might not be sufficient, erred on the side of caution, supplying them in sharper and larger forms. Cattle crashing against the wire—as in San Antonio—were seriously gouged, and in warm, humid summers open wounds led to screwworm infestation. This was especially vexatious for range cattlemen, who did not benefit from barbed wire themselves but lost stock as a result of it. Bills to prohibit its use were introduced in several states; always defeated in legislatures in the West, they did, for brief periods, become law in some eastern states. A compromise had to be found, and gradually the barbs became less sharp (less "vicious," to use the technical term). In 1876, Parker Wineman of Illinois boasted that his barbs "will be sure to penetrate the skin and give pain"; five years later, Joseph Connelly of Pennsylvania claimed that his variety of wire would "resist force and turn stock without entangling or otherwise injuring them."

As humans learned more about animal pain, so animals learned more about human violence. A commercial leaflet encouraging the use of barbed wire advises the farmer to lead young horses "to the fence and let them prick their noses by contact with it . . . they will let it thoroughly alone thereafter." Farmers have always been careful of the well-being of their horses, but cows were expected to get the hang of barbed wire through experience. Finally, the stage was reached where manufacturers, exploiting the fact that animals were capable of learning from experience, produced more conspicuous barbs, which, although clearly capable of [illegible] mainly as an [illegible] (to use the technical terminology, the barbs became more "obvious"). By the end of the 1880s, the success of barbed wire as a tool for the education of cows was complete. At the same time, more and more [illegible] their freedom, as part of a general move to establish landholdings.

By 1914 barbed wire had become a common feature of European agriculture, protecting crops from animals, and animals from other animals. Elsewhere, barbed wire helped to effect the ecological transformation of land not yet firmly brought under human control. In Australia it was used to exterminate unwanted wild animals—simply by fencing off water sources. But it was in the wake of the railways that barbed wire became global—it was used to protect track from stray animals. From 1899 on, the leading manufacturer was the American Steel & Wire Co. In its first eight years, 34 percent of its output was exported; in the next eight years, 44 percent was exported. But with more than 100,000 tons consumed annually, the United States has always been at the center of the barbed-wire economy.

In October 1899 the Boers of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State declared war on the British. By June 1900 the main Boer towns had been taken, and the war seemed to be over. It seemed to have been a conventional war: strongholds besieged, troops deployed, victories in battle followed by daring advances on foot. But the war was not over, and what followed would not be conventional. Regrouping and rethinking their strategy, the Boers started a guerrilla war. Small units of mounted soldiers—"commandos"—harassed the British, cutting railway lines and staging small-scale ambushes.

The aim of the British Army shifted to containing and subduing the last of the Boer forces, and to preventing guerrillas from entering British-controlled areas. Winning the war was no longer a question of battles and sieges but of the invading force's ability to enforce a thoroughgoing occupation. The sparsely cultivated veld had to be brought under complete control. To prevent Boer commandos from being sheltered by their own people, civilian life—largely agricultural—was broken up. Farms were burned and noncombatants brought into what were called "refugee camps" or "concentration camps." Mobility was crucial. The British relied largely on the railways; the Boers, on horses. In order both to secure their communications and to block the movement of horses, the British fortified the railways. A complicated pattern of parallel barbed-wire fences, with thick entanglements stretching between them, was extended along the entire railway system. At intervals of about a mile at first, and then less as the war progressed, small forts or blockhouses were set up. Made of prefabricated iron, these, too, were surrounded by thick barbed-wire entanglements and manned by small units of about six soldiers, armed with a new weapon—the machine gun.



Crossroads, *by Lance Dalbiac, acrylic on canvas, 1991*

To cross the lines, the Boers had to make their approach as far away as possible from the forts and begin the laborious process of cutting the wire under machine-gun fire.

By 1902 the veld was crisscrossed by thousands of miles of wire. As in the American West, an immense space was brought under control. The guerrilla war eventually petered out; the dwindling commando bands were rounded up; and in May 1902 the Boers surrendered.

In the South African [illegible] played a decisive strategic role by defining huge extents of land. In the 1904 Russo-Japanese War, it played [illegible] ing small areas, bound by trenches, that were acutely vulnerable [illegible]

[illegible] gun, effective at a range of a few hundred yards, severely disrupted attacking forces even before they reached the wire. Enemy soldiers [illegible] the entanglement were hopelessly vulnerable. Attacks against a robust defence [illegible] and were considered [illegible] very costly [illegible] precipitation. Their love for cutting through entanglements was immense. Slow down the men and speed up the rate of fire, and you have trench warfare. In the First [illegible] the tactical and technical dimensions [illegible] Following a brief series of rapid advances, the Germans were halted in September 1914 along [illegible] northeast France. The trenches dug on both [illegible] the Boers

Japanese War, except for an even greater use of barbed wire.

The Germans relied on barbed wire even more heavily than the Allies, and military historian J. Ellis reports that "their wire was hardly ever less than fifty feet deep, and in many places it was a hundred feet or more. In the Siegfried Line every trench had at least ten belts of wire in front of it." (A "belt" was a single entanglement, consisting of many strands of wire.) In fact, the static, symmetrical nature of the war made it, in a sense, a collaborative work—a collective effort by both sides to define space. This space was bounded by lines of trenches, stretching from the North Sea to the Swiss border; almost the whole distance could be walked without emerging at ground level. Millions of people lived inside these trenches, supported by huge supply networks. Most of the world economy, indeed, was reorganized in one way or another around these lines. Between them was no-man's-land, an open space usually about five hundred yards wide, heavily covered by wire produced to military specifications: the barbs were closer together and almost twice the length of those on agricultural wire. Its purpose was once again to be "vicious."

The new barriers went beyond the traditional use of obstacles to deter an advancing enemy. Those had been designed for specific military engagements; here the wire was a permanent feature. The front line might move a few miles in this or that direction, but it no longer served any particular plan of attack or defense: it was the premise on which all conduct was based. Here indeed was a way of life that provided a perfect solution to the problem of preventing human movement. For those at the front, even the ones who survived in that lifeless terrain, time was marked by long intervals of boredom punctuated by short periods of engagement. This was a new form of alienation, which was to become an important political force in postwar Europe.

It was the new technology of the tank that finally upset the symmetry on the Western Front, but, ultimately, tanks and planes did not subvert the new environment defined by barbed wire and the machine gun; they confirmed it. Just as animals had to be fenced in, if they were to survive in the new landscape of barbed-wire agriculture, so humans also had to be encased—in tanks and planes—to survive in the new era of barbed-wire warfare.

As the South African war dragged on, more and more Boer farms were destroyed and their inhabitants removed, usually by force, to areas under British control. A whole apparatus was created to provide the Boers with accommodations, medical care, education, protection, and food. There were about fifty camps, each of which held a few thousand inmates at most. Almost all were women and children (the men were fighting). Deaths from disease reached catastrophic levels, something like 30,000 over the entire war. Control was simple: the inmates were totally dependent for all their provisions on the authorities, and because there were so many children they were unlikely to put up resistance.

[Echo]

MAKING THE BIG HOUSE A HOME

From a list of regulations distributed, in English, to foreign prisoners confined in Tokyo's Fuchu Prison.

While walking, avoid folding your arms or hands or putting your hands in your pockets. Avoid waving your shoulders intentionally or dragging your shoes while walking.

You should never strip without permission. Do not hang a towel around your neck.

Conversation in the toilet is prohibited.

Do not sniff or drink paint thinner.

You are not allowed to bother the guards when they are escorting you.

You must not say anything abusive, slanderous, or insulting to others.

You are not allowed to do any kind of sexual play with your inmates. You should not expose your sexual organs.

You are not allowed to creep into your fellow inmate's bed.

You are not allowed to create obscene writing or drawings, or possess any such thing.

You are not allowed to talk loudly, make a big noise, or sing a song at the places where concentration is required.

Tattooing or changing your hairstyle or eyebrows is prohibited.

Without permission, you are not allowed to

Running away from prison or any attempt of



Debris, *by Nicholas Evans-Cato, whose paintings will be on display in April at* [illegible]

At first the camps were left unfenced, to sustain the fiction that these were refugees enjoying British protection, but Boer raids ultimately necessitated an enclosure. These were the first recorded human settlements whose boundaries were defined by barbed wire. What is striking is the ease with which the fences were erected. The materials were available, the investment in labor was not excessive. Barbed-wire camps were created simply because barbed wire was available.

If barbed wire now seems so familiar, this is because of the memorial power of the Holocaust. The control of space was essential to Nazi ideology and practice. [illegible] to the land was opposed [illegible] the Jews. The Jews were an enemy without precise borders, whose defeat required [illegible] summary determination [illegible] quest to colonize Europe and the simultaneous quest to make this area free from Jews are aspects of the same space-seeking process. The Nazi leadership, it is worth bearing in mind, [illegible] to the generation [illegible]

After the [illegible] of Poland, ghettos were set up, comparable to previous concentration zones (in Cuba and the Philippines, for example), but now intended exclusively for a particular human group and defined [illegible] by barbed wire. By 1941, Jews were being systematically murdered in occupied [illegible] the Soviet Union, and at the end of that year [illegible] human device [illegible] destructive phase, that of the death camps. This was [illegible] what [illegible] total control over the space it had requisitioned: [illegible] connected, by rail, to a few centers—to the camps.

[illegible] was the central element in the architecture of

the death camps. "We're separated from each other by barbed wire," Wolfgang Sofsky quotes a survivor as saying in *The Order of Terror*. "The German overlord, have a very special affection for barbed wire. Wherever you go, barbed wire. But you gotta give credit where credit's due: the quality's good, stainless steel. Densely covered with long barbs. Barbed wire horizontally, barbed wire vertically." It was used not only on the perimeter but inside it too, to define particular spaces for particular purposes. A camp was rather like a painting by Mondrian, a rectangle divided and subdivided into smaller rectangles of varying sizes, always staked out by copious deployments of barbed wire. At the perimeter was the obligatory several-layered fence. Wire alone, however, was not enough to ensure absolute control (and its semitransparent nature became a handicap when it became desirable to hide what was inside the fence). Concrete walls often were erected in addition. But the prisoners felt themselves to be surrounded, above all, by wire for two reasons. First, the wire was electrified, making it a doubly potent symbol of the violence surrounding them; second, if you went within a certain distance of the barbed wire you would immediately be shot. In the camps, in short, the definition of space was its own justification. The inmates were forever being ordered to march or to stand still, or they were locked inside high blocks, all of which were identical (so that motion, when not controlled, was divested of meaning). Deprived of any private space, they were allowed just enough room to exist. Everything was calculated to annihilate the spatial presence of the Jews, even before their actual murder.

The history of barbed wire did not end with the death camps. It has many contemporary uses, and the industry remains vibrant. The literature that has been devoted to it takes two rather different forms. One is concerned exclusively with the human context and makes few references to the technology. Barbed wire here becomes a pure symbol of repression: Amnesty International's candle surrounded by a strand of wire is perhaps its best-known instance. Countless memoirs by victims of repression write of their experiences "behind barbed wire" but tend to ignore the mechanics of that repression.

The other kind of literature discusses, often in technical detail, the use of barbed wire to control animals, especially in the American West. In this context, barbed wire becomes a historical character in its own right—a hero whose strength and ingenuity are to be admired. Some of the contributors to this literature actually collect barbed wire. For them it is a cherished piece of Americana, an image of the West itself. They may make reference occasionally to its use in war, but only in its defensive role.

These divergent perspectives tend to obscure the fact that the extension of the use of barbed wire from the control of animal to the control of human movement was not a perverse but a natural development of its capacities. At the basic level of pain—when barbs meet flesh—animals and humans do not differ very much.

It is not as if the erection of so much barbed wire in the American West led in any direct way to trench warfare, which led in turn to concentration camps. There are, nonetheless, marked continuities and similarities between the repression of animals and that of human beings. Humans and animals never can be said to "collaborate" in a capitalist economy. The relations between them closely resemble those between warring groups, or, indeed, between oppressors and the oppressed. But because it is much easier to oppress animals, they can serve as a testing ground for the oppression of other human beings.

Barbed wire does not become barbed wire until thousands of miles of it have been produced. A small length is no more than a meaningless piece of ironwork, no more effective than a thornbush. But arrange mile after mile of it in lines, and you turn it into a new weapon of control. Barbed wire entered human history once its cost had been pushed down by two decades of agricultural development. Before it could adopt its new role, it had first to undergo what might be thought of as a period of capital formation, when miles of it were produced and stockpiled. Only then could it become a key element in the modern texture of power.

[Confession]

UP FROM THE DEEP

From a November interview in Novaya Gazeta, *the Moscow weekly, with an anonymous Russian who claimed to have been a sailor aboard the warship* Peter the Great, *the first vessel to reach the* Kursk *submarine's position after it sank on August 12. Russian officials insist that the accident was caused by a collision with a foreign vessel; Western authorities believe it resulted from a failed onboard weapons test. Translated by Marina Makanova.*

He called the editorial office and asked for a meeting. Mention of the Kursk *was as good as a password.*

So we met. He spoke falteringly into the tape recorder. We know it may pain some people to

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"Plymouth, Basti Wilderness, New Mexico, U.S.A.," by Patrick Nagatani, whose work is currently on display at the Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

read it. We crave their indulgence. But it is even more painful to remain ignorant.

The *Peter the Great* fired torpedoes and missiles at the *Kursk*. There is no doubt about it. It is strictly forbidden to test new weapons in a military exercise. But if you want to save money, then this is the thing to do.

That wonderful new weapon was tested.

A mine detects in the water, opens its sting, and releases a smart torpedo that searches out submarines.

We happened to be in the same area with the *Kursk*. The firings were organized by civilian specialists.

So we fired and fired, and suddenly a pillar rose from under the water that looked a little bit like a nuclear blast, then another one. Everyone was dumbfounded.

When we spoke, it was, "We hit somebody." We thought it was an American sub.

The *Peter the Great* immediately left the area. We could think of nothing better than leaving. As we left, a radio message was picked up—"Communication lost with *Kursk*"—and the area indicated was precisely the one where the firings took place. It then dawned on us whom we had hit. We turned back and began the search. We were sure we would go to jail.

Back in Severomorsk, we bought up all the vodka in town. The civilian experts drank pure alcohol. It didn't make them drunk. Later it turned out that nobody was going to look for the real culprits.

We were ordered to promote the theory of an "encounter with the enemies." The admirals were covering their asses. Nobody was thinking about the crew. Eyewitnesses were not needed.

They stayed alive for three days, as we learned

from the note by the late commander [illegible] lone crew. In the [illegible] the [illegible] dent. The experts were weeping. It read "A were murdered." It [illegible] the late August [illegible] after midnight. Later the [illegible] in their [illegible] fight died. The last date on the note is August 15. The orders were for everyone to say that they had died within two hours of the accident.

P.S. — After the [illegible] to phone [illegible] me about "Are you punitive?"

When I said yes, he paused [illegible] a minute. After that you have to [illegible] something.

He hung up.

We are punitive. And we understand it [illegible] all the submariners.

Everyone who can still drink — let us drink to their memory.

[Tips]

SOCIAL WORK SECURITY

From "Fast Facts," a brochure prepared by the Caregivers of the Ontario Safety and Health Association and Ontario Public Health Association to help workers in the area.

Most of us visit clients in their homes. While these visits are generally routine, non-threatening experiences, there is always a possibility that a confrontation may occur. This pamphlet includes information to help you plan for potential hazards. Other [illegible] should be [illegible].

[illegible]

Before you [illegible] home, [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[Verbal]

NICE ®ACK

[illegible], a complaint filed with the World Intellectual Property Organization Arbitration and Mediation Center by Tata Sons Limited, an India-based conglomerate, against www.bodacious-tatas.com, a pornographic website based in New Jersey.

[illegible] the dominant and distinctive part of the domain name registered by the Respondent in this case, namely "tatas," is confusingly similar, and almost identical, to the Complainant's trademark TATA.

The Complainant contends that the use by the Respondent of the impugned domain name [illegible] on the Complainant's image and status. The provision of sexually explicit and pornographic material on the website under the name TATAS is likely to cause bewilderment, if not astonishment, on the part of customers of the Complainant. Many would be unable to come to terms with a situation whereby a company would be prepared to lend its name and well-known mark to pornography —something that is so contrary to Indian value

It is true, of course, that the Respondent has used "tata" plus the addition of the letter "s," whilst the Complainant's trademark has no "s." This, however, is of no benefit to the Respondent, as the Tata Group of Companies is colloquially referred to as the "Honda of Tatas" or "Tatas" throughout the world.

One might think, nevertheless, that the inclusion of the word "bodacious" in the domain name registered by the Respondent, taken together with the addition of the letter "s" to TATA, could create a sufficient distinction between the Complainant's TATA, on the one hand, and "Bodacious Tatas" on the other. Such a contention, however, is untenable by virtue of the very high level of goodwill that both TATA and TATAS have acquired.

The addition, therefore, of a word like "bodacious" and the addition of the letter "s" do not render the domain name any less confusingly similar. Indeed, the opposite is true, particularly when one considers most of the meanings attributed to the word "bodacious."

The Panel entirely agrees with the Complainant and directs that the registration of the domain name be canceled forthwith.

ard's—God's fault, really, for bad design. I never knew, but a rosy cheek did to me what exuberant breasts did for other boys, what the French robustly call *le balcon*, a phrase that imparts to well-endowed girls an almost architectural allure. Iris's face, puckish and rotund, admirably set off those cheeks of hers, perhaps confirming her jollity, her love of life, the presence within her chest of a powerful Irish or Scottish heart, hidden away like a penis under a sporran and kilt. Black-haired, she had an elvish quality, mixing looks of near-contempt or at least ill-disguised aversion with a bonhomie I found exotic.

The problem was getting to her. She was a looker who did not talk but conversed in a series of glances and shrugs I could not parley with. Her mind was so made-up, it seemed, only a scalpel could open it. So she had a good chance of remaining an idol, fetching and vivid, but past my reach beyond an occasional word. Perhaps she was frigid, but with those cheeks I doubted it. She certainly started my mind, my appetites, going through maneuvers that were going to seem familiar; I was just another kid putting himself, for chemistries unknown, through a series of traditional hoops. And so it turned out.

Iris Foreman turned me on to a much more powerful presence who actually, once a week, trod into my own home for a music lesson. I had eyes for Hetty Green, a more glamorous entity, I thought, than Iris Foreman, and I see her still, palpably bulging in her dark blue raincoat like (they were all like movie stars to me in those days) Kim Novak, perhaps, something crisp and suave in her demeanor predicated on the certain knowledge of how amiable she was: a zaftig peppermint, a feline sparkler. Approachable, yes. All I had to do was march into her music lesson to hand my mother some wholly inessential item—a pencil or an eraser—and I would get a glimpse of those ripe and agile features under stress.

Whenever I could, I watched her arrive, clad always in a discreet medley of grays and blues, with something shy and self-deprecating in her ways. She was sure of herself at thirteen, but not of others. On a red-letter day, when my mother was elsewhere in the house, I let her in. I *let her in!* Not without a certain military nervousness, as you may expect, accompanied by a few vacuous words. She seemed a creature of air and heather, not of haggis and peat, and—Heaven be praised—she had a small nevus, or birthmark, at the corner of her eye, a rosy star, I thought, indicative of something celestial in her. She had been picked out; the pink nevus was a badge of honor, not a blotch like the one my sister wore on her left hand. Hetty did not linger on preliminaries; she hit the piano and the music stool, and my mother banished me

with a cut wave. No peepers. I closed the door and listened, without managing to glean from her flawless execution the first clue to her personality. She disappeared into Brahms or Chopin (whatever my mother fancied to impose on her, or what the village thought top-flight music at the time), and I with a mourner's chops went away into the rest of the house, determined to get closer if I could. My mother was rarely late, alas, so I had no chance to fill in for her as valet, barker, or stooge.

But I would get more than that, having already developed, no doubt, the first maneuvers of the born voluptuary, a knack for sniffing at the music stool for the left-behind aroma of whoever sat there besides my mother. This may not have been an elegant thing to do, or even moral, but it certainly set another sense buzzing and put sight back in its place. For the most part, my sniffings had yielded up only the poorest of spoors: something dark green in impact, diffused by the fumes of the gas fire and shaken hard by passing omnibuses bearing number 30. Could this be the smell of romance or deviant lust? No, lust included all, did it not? To be sure, it was far from the muzzle butting upward under the skirt to the forbidden zone beyond, that paradise of sopping moss and sweat-gland fog, with the butter either unceremoniously nosing home or surreptitiously advancing through indirection akin to foreplay: the dawdling of the pre-sniff. I was into none of that, perhaps never would be, since all our sexual endeavor in those days, maybe weakened by the omnipresent war (1943) soon to be won by somebody, had about it a faintness, an amateurish dawdling as if nothing mattered, neither consummation nor closure, neither touch nor smell, neither sight nor feel. Perhaps we suffered, all of us, from an overdose of Ironside served in the sick-thick sweet tea of the time (sergeant-major tea that kept the spoon standing up even if nothing else), or a hangover from the Middle Ages' cult of courtly love, a touch of chivalry gone wrong in the interest of being fastidious among bombs and sirens. Had an outer crudity unmanned us boys and made the girls ungraspable as eels? Why were we so [illegible] mune? Was this to become the age of hesitation? Both the era and the phase?

I had no idea and was not keen to solve the problem on an intellectual plane. In fact, there ensued a series of non-conversations as Hetty Green and I, mostly as I handed my mother her cup of tea or opened/closed the music-room door, hazarded preliminary overtures in words, even as I knew, and she did not know that I knew, the delible taint of her left like a pansy pong on the crushed brocade of the music stool, I more intimate with my mother's

[illegible] maybe not that far, but living comfortably on [illegible] only the sheerest of panties et cetera, so [illegible] through. How infuriating that she never came last but often second or first. It was a matter of [illegible] of recording aroma, trapping it for reference purposes [illegible] mere periodical into a true arsenal as on a warship, full of gelignite and gunpowder, guncotton and sulfur. Our connection had no point, no direction, certainly not the germ of any event, of my future [illegible] after all this time all [illegible] we were going to test an umbrella in Cherbourg. We went, we sat, we cuddled a bit, we

[Diagram]

DIRTY BIRDY



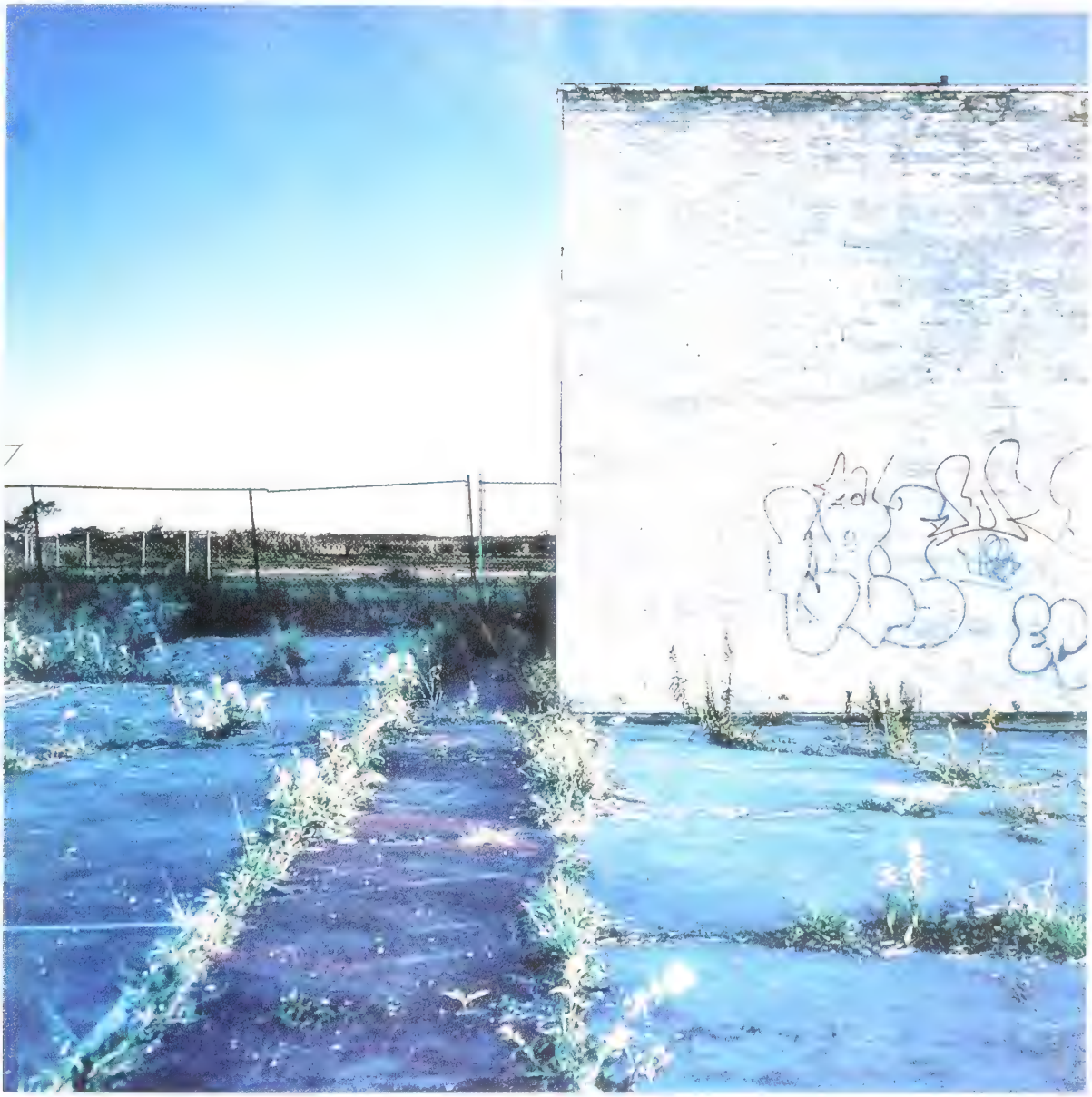
came home, and I got off two stops before her. Did that ever happen, that sleepwalking, inhuman series of rendezvous, about which she told Jean Adams, "He's very serious, about odd things"? How little she and Jean Adams knew that for me she was a boy with Quasimodo pretensions not exactly sketched by the ludicrous diagrams in the French primer that [illegible] us with such captions as "Jean needs some eggs, so here he is in the outhouse." Paul collects rank hair, or its aftertang, so here he is at the music stool, acolyte at an obscene altar, and only thirteen. Look what lust has led him to. What if she knew? Would she not starve herself for an entire week preceding her music lesson?

And so came about the event of the air-raid shelter, crude lean-to next to the bus stop, a condign hovel made of brickwork and concrete blocks, internally reinforced by steel girders. It was another place to cuddle, just like the fatal Platonic cinema, but I was soon, in a fit of rehearsed impetuosity, fumbling within her blouse, having worked my way unimpeded through several layers aimed against November weather. No complaint from her, but I was glacial as a prosthetic hand cupping a suede-skin dolphin. Was this what all arousal led to? Nothing, save the mucous pleat not even considered tonight? I would have been better off with the *Boy's Own Book of Constellations*. Her airless reverie had met mine and, finding a sibling, gone to sleep. Passion had lost itself in the dusty corners of that dank shelter, rank from the piss of a thousand incontinents reduced to mere beer carriers. Cats, too. It was like being in a one-night stanza from an early Eliot poem, with oafs leering out over their elbows from foolishly opened windows, and amateur call girls upstairs, seen as silhouettes only, unfurling their precious nylons before an encounter with a Bradford millionaire oiling and sheathing his Yorkshire yard. That sort of sordid.

What had happened to the regal fume of the music stool? Was it the lack of that aroma, now so easily plunderable in the dark of the brick blockhouse, that sapped our drive? I had learned something severe about mood, atmosphere, and [illegible] early on the level of the unmistakable; I could not define it. Somehow, I knew, in spite of all you'd heard, there were times when everything went wrong without the least aid from human bungling. If only I had learned the lines. If only we had felt more drive to do the cherished pas de deux, there in the gloom as the awaited bus neared us through a maze of distant [illegible] around bomb sites and vast holes in parking lots. Buses were always late anyway. It would have been "on." And, rhetorically ahead of myself, I decided it would be all right, on this night of nights, with the lady bountiful trapped in her war-work castle, her tresses streaming, to fumble about among the stunted and the frail, just like the stunted and the frail, among those whose lives had not so much collapsed as failed to muster for the last roundup, just so long as I could live without being indifferent, loyal to something delightful but having no need to go through on with it. Listless, lustless. Sometimes, I said, I catch myself feeling almost human: the grandiosity of thirteen. On the bus, she spoke with the same relevant obliquity you get from foreign speakers who haven't quite seized your drift and answer you as if "outside" meant "away." *You have been outside a long time, Señor.* Oh yes. And I am not coming back, not at this rate. The floating fume of Hetty Green wafted into the cordite-smelling night and found a more adept swain.

What had we heard in the half-truculent way we heard anything about biology? That nightly bombing, even miles away, stopped girls from menstruating (just as in later years a flight across time zones would scramble the periods of flight attendants). It certainly clobbered the onset of the blood, sometimes eerily called menarche. So close to anarchy. The boys traditionally stored their sperm in big stone jars beneath their beds, after gigantic feats of beating off both privately and in the school cloakrooms after soccer or gym. Yet much of this was myth. We had no idea of what was normal except on the level of the imaginary, but we did know something was affecting us, reducing us to what Australians called three-quarter rat power, or even worse. What was it that made us statuesque, too willing to stand still, silent, inert? Why did we content ourselves with a blithe neutrality like those old monks who called it spiritual inanition? I often wondered as the pink star on Hetty Green's face seemed to wane, at least in my regard, and her previously exciting short, choppy walk inflamed me less and less, even the few inches of pink, ruddy leg exposed between the top of her rubber boot and—well, where? What? Where was the Plimsoll line, past which she must not be loaded? My infatuation began to die of too many dedicated metaphors.

Yet only, as I began to recognize, because I had seen something else, or rather someone, on a windy day: tall, regal Pauline Fisher, marching along the breezeway with her dark-blue gym tunic blown up and around her in a perfect helix, exposing her navy blue knickers and those samite thighs, with her long black hair streaming behind her like some funereal bridal veil. She was not rose-cheeked either, but some rose from the south, a Valkyrie of the vine, I thought, who had won the gold medal from the



7

local university for spoken French. What a goddess, expressionless, as I had learned all sentient nubile women had to be. But I was a time bomb capable of saying, even then, "shit" without vehemence. Neither she nor Iris Foreman nor Hetty Green had yet [illegible] in the grotesque tradition [illegible] which a bunch of yobs grabbed a girl, forced her to the ground, and exposed her privates, fondling and squeezing them, often with the ritual cry of "She's got [illegible] so close to the veldt [illegible] scooched under his guests' chairs at formal dinners and felt at their private [illegible] cially carved slot he allowed himself, and which they put up with. *Foramen habet*, he'd Latinize, meaning "has a gash." You could see that the reigning robbery shied away from these girls, who were sheathed in something, a feral caul maybe, other than my admiration. Something primal kept them away from these near-women, sent them to younger girls such as my sister, whom I had one day defended (and [illegible] like head girl, though she was not, and the only exchange I had with her was strictly intellectual, late on, when we were both in the same arts group, meaning literature. By then I was more

aloof than any girl, deep into Baudelaire and Gide, an odd mix of savant and jock, left alone except when on the field of play, where I had become a treasured demon. Thus untapped, so to speak, Pauline Fisher remained among the aloofest gargoyles of my post-pubertal life until, decades later, something extraordinary came in the mail, from a young woman called Deepti, who had read and liked what I sometimes think my best novel, *The Place in Flowers Where Pollen Rests*, and my longest, about the Hopi of Arizona. I answered Deepti's letter at some length, filed hers in the box that preserves the best of reader mail, and forgot.

A year or so later came another letter, or rather two: one explained that Deepti was Pauline Fisher's daughter, and the other, from Pauline Fisher herself, gave her location as San Luis Obispo. She too had crossed the Atlantic, but she had kept up her French, and she remembered me as a jock bearing his cricket bag to her hometown, whom I played for on Saturday afternoons. Little did she know that, to get to sleep each night, I envision myself taking the bus to play, bag in hand, getting off the bus, walking to the grounds, entering the pavilion, changing into my playing gear, but never actually playing. I fall asleep too soon.

From these assorted interlocking encounters I have come to learn something about the layeredness of life, of how one event prepares you for another one not necessarily more taxing or more cheering. Savage simplifications and complexities both follow and precede one another in what Darwin called *panmixis*, and some of us can defend ourselves only with words, paint, music. It is too much for us until we take control of it in our miniaturist way, and then it perhaps saves us from, in my own case, an excess of emotion at what life is like and what it does unsupervised. Rose-cheeked lasses or the ones with medals for spoken French, who got me on the raw, were somehow caryatids at ritual as I tried to maneuver my way from boyhood into being, well, a brave or an Ashanti who goes out to kill a lion with a spear.

Somewhere between Hetty Green and now, I found it was all right to fumble about among the withered mothers piloted by smoldering devoted daughters, the tubular-legged young matrons, the ex-models with crumbling looks, the old gents with unlit cheroots, just so long as I can get some fresh tiger shrimp to munch on during sunset at an outside table, the right antibacterial mouthwash to keep my teeth from falling out afterward, and, on top of all that, and so many words, a warm grave never snowed upon.

It is no doubt merely rhetorical to say that I don't mind life under the snows (not much), but not death. I learn, in both the sense of discover and that of teach myself repeatedly, that when I am in my adored tropics I am mostly alone, and there give full reign to a prose habit. When I am not, I give reign to a prose habit. The universe, thanks to the warmth of coincidence and the heat of company, is not the empty place it's supposed to be. We should not sentimentalize this daedal anonym, though we tend to. Is this why people en route from winter to the sun behave, as I have observed, truculently? Is it what the universe or the airlines are doing to them that irks them so much? When I expect anticipatory delight, I witness mostly bad temper. It must be the airlines; the universe tends not to affect everyday misbehavior, unless I am quite wrong. It remains easier to build a shrine, of bricks or prose, than to get a deity down to haunt it. The squabbling parrots in the palms above my head have no opinion of the human gag reflex, flubbed as it is, and I have the hardest time pretending a mind came up with it rather than an impromptu twitch in the cosmic manger.

[Strategies]

BULL-MARKET BABIES

From Wow the Dow!: The Complete Guide to Teaching Your Kids How to Invest in the Stock Market, *by Pat Smith and Lynn Roney, published by Fireside Press.*

Imagine a world in which kids hang posters in their rooms of the New York Stock Exchange instead of rock stars. They collect trading cards of Bill Gates and Warren Buffet instead of sports figures. They watch the financial news instead of cop shows and play an online stock-market game instead of shoot-'em-up video games.

The idea of children investing and understanding what they are doing is beyond many people's wildest imaginations, but we're here to tell you that it is possible. We know because we've seen it happen with our own children.

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PART IV *(Lectures 37—48)*
Dynasty XXII Egypt United Dynasty XXV The Nubians Have Their Day Dynasty XXVI The Saite Period Dynasty XXVII The Persians Dynasties XXVIII to XXXI The Beginning of the End Alexander the Great The First Ptolemies The Middle Ptolemies The Decline Animal Mummies Cleopatra's Family Cleopatra The Last Ptolemy The Grand Finale

NO-RISK MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE!

About Your Professor:

ROBERT BRIER (Ph.D., University of North Carolina, 1970) is an Egyptologist and professor of philosophy at the C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University. He has served as director of the "Egyptology Today" program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and as host of the Learning Channel series, *The Great Egyptians*. He has twice been selected as a Fulbright Scholar, and has received LIU's David Newton Award for Teaching Excellence.

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investing in an interest-bearing fashion? Our field tested strategy is to zero in on your child's favorite things.

Let's say your child has cut her knee and insists on the tattoo plastic strip rather than the plain old bandage. "Just what is it about these tattoo bandages that makes them better?" you can ask. A heartfelt defense of tattoo bandages, for instance, could be the opening you need to feel out her interest in ownership. You could say, "Well, if you like these bandages so much, maybe you'd like to own part of the company that makes them."

If she fails to take the bait, say nothing more. You're in no rush. You're waiting for curiosity to compel her to ask what you mean by part ownership, and in time you'll get it. Try the same game on another day with another favorite thing. "I think Schwinn makes great bikes, too," you could say. "That's why I'm a part owner of that company. Would you like to be a part owner also?"

Our experience has taught us that you can integrate investment education into everyday activities such as eating out, going to the movies, shopping for groceries or clothing, turning the lights on in your home, or attending an athletic outing. The list is endless once you start thinking about the major corporations behind the products and services you use every day. If you keep things unpressured, eventually you will get a "What did you mean when you said I could own the company?" response.

Chances are that your child's investments will be moneymakers, because kids are very good stock pickers. They know what's hot without even trying. From what we've seen, kids have enough common knowledge of brands to rival a skyscraper full of stock-market gurus.

Your kids and ours are bull-market babies. Since their birth the stock market has experienced the most explosive growth in its history—8,000 points in the last eight years alone. Of course, if you call your child a bull-market baby without explaining what it means, he is sure to look at you as though you've lost it. So say something like, "Bull market is how we describe the stock market when prices keep going up and up over time—just the way they have been doing for the last few years and ever since [illegible]."

How [illegible] help your child put this astounding growth into context? We've come up with another one of our handy visual aids that helps to personalize the Dow for your child. By taking the Dow Jones Industrial Average for each of her birthdays and plotting these numbers to form a growth curve, you can see how the Dow grows along with your child.

Using the Internet for research, have your child make a list of the Dow averages for each of her birthdays and then let her transfer them to a graph. When she has plotted the points, have her connect the dots. The line she draws—a steadily ascending hill with a growth spurt at the end—will look a lot like the line her pediatrician has been drawing for her height and weight since her birth. She and the Dow have grown up together!

[Background]

THE MERCENARY'S POSITION

From an interview with John Mullins, the mercenary on whom Raven Software based its Soldier of Fortune video game. The interview appeared last winter in PC Gamer *magazine (www.pcgamer.com).*

PC GAMER: So how does one decide to become a mercenary?

JOHN MULLINS: We don't like the word "mercenary." We prefer "contractor" or "consultant." If you go in somewhere claiming to be a mercenary, everyone expects you to be some wild-eyed, gun-carrying, knife-wielding maniac in camouflage, wrapped head to toe in ammunition belts.

My decision had to do with my retirement from the military and the realization (borne out by several job interviews) that there weren't too many openings in middle management for a person with my particular skills. A man's gotta eat.

PC GAMER: How many bad guys have you killed?

MULLINS: One doesn't keep count of such things. The only score you run up is, Did you kill them or did they kill you?

PC GAMER: How's the pay?

MULLINS: I've worked for as much as $250 an hour. It's less than most lawyers will charge, but we get better results. You don't go into this business to get rich.

PC GAMER: What kinds of games do you like to play?

MULLINS: I've played Quake, Rainbow Six, and a couple of others. Now I'm involved in Age of Empires, and I'm enjoying it immensely.

PC GAMER: What is your opinion on video games and violence, in particular in the high school and other shootings?

MULLINS: Back when I was a child, it was *The Wild One*, *Blackboard Jungle* and *Rebel Without a Cause* that were going to ruin our generation. And, of course, the biggest corrupter of youth was that infernal rock-and-roll music. Most of us turned out pretty okay, though the jury may still be out on me.

PC GAMER: How true to life are the scenarios a player will experience in Soldier of Fortune?

MULLINS: It's very true to life if you're talking about the team-play aspect. Seldom do you get the chance to go into a situation as a singleton—nor would you want to. It doesn't matter how good you are, sooner or later someone is bound to get in a lucky shot. You die. I knew people who were killed way back in the early 1960s. You know what? They're still dead.

PC GAMER: If you were in a bar and someone started something with you, are you confident you could take him out?

MULLINS: Yes, though I've talked myself out of a hell of a lot more fights than I've been in. You get hurt in fights, even if the hurt is nothing more than getting your knuckles cut on someone's teeth. Having an infected bite is not fun.

[Story]

BELLS IN THE MORNING

A previously unpublished story by Richard Yates, from The Collected Stories of Richard Yates, *to be published in May by Henry Holt and Company. Yates is the author of nine books, including* Eleven Kinds of Loneliness. *He died in 1992.*

At first they were grotesque shapes, nothing more. Then they became drops of acid, cutting the scum of his thick, dreamless sleep. Finally he knew they were words, but they carried no meaning.

"Cramer," Murphy was saying. "Let's go, Cramer, wake up. Let's go, Cramer."

Through sleepy paste-ups [illegible] at Murphy. Then the wind hit him, blue cold as Murphy pulled the [illegible] face and chest.

"You sure like to sleep, don't you, kid." Murphy was looking at him in that faintly derisive way.

Cramer [illegible] his mouth. "All right," he said. "All right, I'm [illegible] but it's [illegible] but all of the [illegible] His cold legs sprawled out, cramped in their mud-caked pants. He pressed his eyes, then lifted the helmet and [illegible] roots of his matted hair [illegible] was blue and gray. Cramer dug for a cigaret, embarrassed at having been hard to wake up again. "Go ahead and get some sleep, Murphy," he said. "I'm awake now."

"No, I'll stay awake, too," Murphy said. "Six o'clock. Light."

Cramer wanted to say, "All right, then, you stay awake and I'll go back to sleep." Instead he let his shivering come out in a loud, [illegible] noise and said, "Christ, it's cold."

It was in Germany, in the Ruhr. It was spring, and warm enough to make you sweat as you walked in the afternoon, but still cold at night and in the early morning. Still too cold for a raincoat in a hole.

They stared toward where the enemy was supposed to be. Nothing to see; only a dark area that was the plowed field and then a light one that was the mist.

"They threw in a couple about a half hour ago," Murphy was saying. "Way the hell off, over to the left. Ours have been going over right along; don't know why they've quit now. You slept through the whole works." Then he said, "Don't you ever clean that?" and he was looking, in the pale light, at Cramer's rifle. "Bet the son of a bitch won't fire."

Cramer said he would clean it, and he almost said for Christ's sake, but he didn't. It was better that he didn't, for Murphy would have answered something about only trying to help you, kid. And anyway, Murphy was right.

"Might as well make some coffee," Murphy said, cramming dirty hands into his pockets. "Smoke won't show in this mist."

Cramer found a can of coffee powder, and they both fumbled with clammy web equipment for their cups and canteens. Murphy scraped out a hollow in the dirt between his boots and put a K-ration box there. He lit it, and they held their cups over the flame, cradling them.

In a little while they were comfortable, swallowing coffee and smoking, shivering when fingers of the first yellow sunlight caught [illegible] shoulder and neck. The grayness had gone now; things had color. Trees were [illegible] on the [illegible] Murphy said they wouldn't have to move out right away, and Cramer agreed. That was when they heard the bells; church bells, thin [illegible] the [illegible]



[illegible] by Maurice MacForrie. A book of MacForrie's photographs, Abandoning West, will be published this summer by the Afton Historical Society Press.

long, I'd say, maybe two miles, to the rear.

"Listen," Murphy said quietly. "Don't that sound nice?" That was the word. Nice. Round and dirty, Murphy's face was relaxed now. His lips bore two black parallel lines, marking the place where the mouth closed when Murphy made it firm. Between the lines the skin was pink and moist; and these inner lips, Cramer had noticed, were the only part of a face that always stayed clean. Except the eyes.

"My brother and me used to pull the bells every Sunday at home," Murphy said. "When we was kids, I mean. Used to get half a dollar apiece for it. Son of a bitch, if that don't sound just the same."

Listening, they sat smiling shyly at each other. Church bells on misty mornings were things you forgot sometimes, like fragile china cups and women's hands. When you remembered them you smiled shyly, mostly because you didn't know what else to do.

"Must be back in that town we came through yesterday," Cramer said. "Seems funny they'd be ringing church bells there."

Murphy said it did seem funny, and then it happened. The eyes got big, and when the voice came it was small, intense, not Murphy's voice at all. "Reckon the war's over?"

Something fluttered down Cramer's spine. "By God, Murphy. By God, it makes sense. It makes sense, all right."

"Damned if it don't," Murphy said, and they gaped at each other, starting to grin; wanting to laugh and shout, to get out and run.

"Son of a bitch," Murphy said.

Cramer heard his own voice, high and babbling: "That could be why the artillery [illegible]

Could it be this easy? Could it happen this way? Would the message come down from headquarters? Would Battalion get it from Regiment? Would Francetti, the platoon runner, come stumbling out across this plowed field with the news? Francetti, waving his pudgy arms and screaming, "Hey, you guys! Come on back! It's all over! It's all over, you guys!" Crazy. Crazy. But why not?

"By God, Murphy, do you think so?"

"Watch for flares," Murphy said. "They might shoot flares."

"Yeah, that's an idea, they might shoot flares."

They could see nothing, hear nothing except the faint, silver monotony of the bells. Remember this. Remember every second of it. Remember Murphy's face and the hole and the canteens and the mist. Keep it all.

Watch for flares.

Remember the date. March something. No April. April something, 1945. What did Meyers say the other day? Day before yesterday? Meyers told you the date then. He said, "What do you know, this is Good [illegible]"

Cramer swallowed, then looked at Murphy quickly. "Wait a minute wait a minute. We're wrong." He watched Murphy's smile grow limp as he told him. "Meyers. Remember what Meyers said about Good Friday? This is Easter Sunday, Murph."

Murphy eased himself back against the side of the hole. "Oh yeah," he said. "Oh yeah, sure. That's right."

Cramer swallowed again and said, "Kraut civilians probably going to church back there."

Murphy's lips came together in a single black line, and he was quiet for a while. Then, stubbing his cigarette in the dirt, he said, "Son of a bitch. Easter Sunday." ■

THE CASE AGAINST HENRY KISSINGER

PART ONE

The making of a war criminal

By Christopher Hitchens

THE 1968 ELECTION
INDOCHINA • CHILE

It will become clear, and may as well be stated at the outset, that this is written by a political opponent of Henry Kissinger. Nonetheless, I have found myself continually amazed at how much hostile and discreditable material I have felt compelled to omit. I am concerned only with those Kissingerian offenses that might or should form the basis of a legal prosecution: for war crimes, for crimes against humanity, and for offenses against common or customary or international law, including conspiracy to commit murder, kidnap, and torture.



SOUTH VIETNAMESE NAPALM VICTIM, 1967

Thus, I might have mentioned Kissinger's recruitment and betrayal of the Iraqi Kurds, who were falsely encouraged by him to take up arms against Saddam Hussein in 1972–75, and who were then abandoned to extermination on their hillsides when Saddam Hussein made a diplomatic deal with the Shah of Iran, and who were deliberately lied to as well as abandoned. The conclusions of the report by Congressman Otis Pike [illegible] reading and reveal on Kissinger's part a callous indifference to human life and human rights. But they fall into the category of depraved realpolitik and do not seem to have violated any known law.

In the same way, Kissinger's orchestration of political and military and diplomatic cover for [illegible] in South Africa present us with a morally repulsive record and includes the appalling consequences of the destabilization of Angola. Again, though, one is looking at a sordid period of Cold War and imperial history, and an exercise of irresponsible power, rather than an episode of organized crime. Additionally, one must take into account the [illegible] which might in outline have been followed under any administration, [illegible] Vietnam, or secretary of state.

Similar reservations might be held about Kissinger's chairmanship of the Presidential Commission on Central America in the early 1980s, which was staffed by Oliver North and which [illegible] whitewashed death-squad activity on the isthmus. Or about the political [illegible] Kissinger while in the employ of the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran and its [illegible]. The [illegible] to say, could be [illegible] blame the whole exorbitant cruelty and cynicism of decades on one man. (Occasionally one gets an intriguing glimpse, as when Kissinger urges Pres[illegible] to [illegible] the anti-Communist Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, all the while posing as Communism's most daring and principled foe.)

Christopher Hitchens is [illegible] Kurdistan, Palestine, [illegible]

No, I have confined myself to the identifiable crimes that can and should be placed on a proper bill of indictment, whether the actions taken were in line with general "policy" or not. These include, in this installment, the deliberate mass killing of civilian populations in Indochina and the personal suborning and planning of murder of a senior constitutional officer in a democratic nation—Chile—with which the United States was not at war. In a second installment we will see that this criminal habit of mind extends to Bangladesh, Cyprus, East Timor, and even to Washington, D.C.

Some of these allegations can be constructed only prima facie, since Mr. Kissinger—in what may also amount to a deliberate and premeditated obstruction of justice—has caused large tranches of evidence to be withheld or possibly destroyed. We now, however, enter upon the age when the defense of "sovereign immunity" for state crimes has been held to be void. As I demonstrate below, Kissinger has understood this decisive change even if many of his critics have not. The House of Lords' ruling in London, on the international relevance of General Augusto Pinochet's crimes, added to the splendid activism of the Spanish magistracy and the verdicts of the International Tribunal at The Hague, has destroyed the shield that immunized crimes committed under the justification of *raison d'etat*. There is now no reason why a warrant for the trial of Kissinger may not be issued in any one of a number of jurisdictions and no reason why he may not be compelled to answer it. Indeed, as I write, there are a number of jurisdictions where the law is at long last beginning to catch up with the evidence. And we have before us in any case the Nuremberg precedent, by which the United States solemnly undertook to be bound.

MANY OF KISSINGER'S PARTNERS IN POLITICS ARE NOW IN JAIL. HIS OWN LONELY IMPUNITY IS RANK

A failure to proceed will constitute a double or triple offense to justice. First, it will violate the essential and now uncontested principle that not even the most powerful are above the law. Second, it will suggest that prosecutions for war crimes and crimes against humanity are reserved for losers, or for minor despots in relatively negligible countries. This in turn will lead to the paltry politicization of what could have been a noble process and to the justifiable suspicion of double standards.

Many if not most of Kissinger's partners in politics, from Greece to Chile to Argentina to Indonesia, are now in jail or awaiting trial. His own lonely impunity is rank; it smells to heaven. If it is allowed to persist then we shall shamefully vindicate the ancient philosopher Anacharsis, who maintained that laws were like cobwebs—strong enough to detain only the weak and too weak to hold the strong. In the name of innumerable victims known and unknown, it is time for justice to take a hand.

REGARDING HENRY

On December 2, 1998, Michael Korda was being interviewed on camera in his office at Simon & Schuster. As one of the reigning magnates of New York publishing, he had edited and "produced" the work of authors as various as Tennessee Williams, Richard Nixon, Joan Crawford, and Joe Bonanno. On this particular day, he was talking about the life and thoughts of Cher, whose portrait adorned the wall behind him. And then the telephone rang and there was a message to call "Dr." Henry Kissinger as soon as possible. A polymath like Korda knows—what with the exigencies of publishing in these vertiginous days—how to switch in an instant between Cher and high statecraft. The camera kept running, and recorded the following scene for a tape that I possess:

Asking his secretary to get the number (759-7919—the digits of Kissinger Associates), Korda quips dryly, to general laughter in the office, that it "should be 1-800-CAMBODIA . . . 1-800-BOMB-CAMBODIA." After a pause of nicely calibrated duration (no senior editor likes to be put on hold while he's receiving company, especially media company) it's "Henry—Hi, how are you? . . . You're getting all the publicity you could want in the *New York Times* but not the *kind* you want . . . I also think it's very, very dubious for the administration to simply say yes, they'll release these papers . . . no . . . no, absolutely . . . no . . . no . . . well, hmmm, yeah. We did it until quite recently, frankly, and he did prevail . . . Well, I don't think there's any question about that, as uncomfortable as it may be . . . Henry, this is totally outrageous . . . yeah . . . also the jurisdiction. This is a Spanish judge appealing to an English court about a Chilean head of state. So it's, it . . . Also, Spain has no rational jurisdiction over events in Chile anyway, so that makes absolutely no sense . . . Well, that's probably true . . . If you would. I think that would be by far and away the best . . . Right, yeah, no, I think it's exactly what you should do, and I don't think it should be long, and I think it should end with your father's letter. I think it's a very important document . . . Yes, but I think the letter is wonderful, and central to the entire book. Can you let me read the Lebanon chapter over the weekend?" At this point the conversation ends, with some jocular observa-



HENRY KISSINGER, 1973

tions by Korda about his upcoming colonoscopy "a totally repulsive procedure."

By means of the same tiny internal camera or its forensic equivalent, one could deduce not a little about the world of Henry Kissinger from this microcosmic exchange. The first and most important is this: Sitting in his office at Kissinger Associates, with its tentacles of business and consultancy stretching from Belgrade to Beijing, and cushioned by innumerable other directorships and boards, he still shudders when he hears of the arrest of a dictator. Syncopated the conversation with Korda may be, but it's clear that the key word is "jurisdiction." What had the *New York Times* been reporting that fine morning? On December 2, 1998, its front page carried the following report from Tim Weiner, the paper's national-security correspondent in Washington. Under the headline "U.S. Will Release Files on Crimes Under Pinochet," he wrote:

> Treading into a political and diplomatic confrontation it tried to avoid, the United States decided today to declassify some secret documents on killings and torture committed during the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in Chile.
>
> The decision to release such [illegible] first sign that the United States will cooperate

the National Archives, the Presidential libraries of Gerald R. Ford and Jimmy Carter, and other Government agencies. According to Justice Department records, these files contain a history of human rights abuses and international terrorism:

• In 1975 State Department diplomats in Chile protested the Pinochet regime's record of killing and torture, filing dissents to American foreign policy without superiors in Washington.

• The C.I.A. has files on assassinations by the regime and the Chilean secret police. The intelligence agency also has records on Chile's attempts to establish an international right-wing covert-action squad.



THE SIGNING OF THE PARIS PEACE ACCORD, 1973

• The Ford Library contains many of Mr. Kissinger's secret files on Chile, which have never been made public. Through a secretary, Mr. Kissinger declined a request for an interview today.

One must credit Kissinger with grasping what so many other people did not: that if the Pinochet precedent became established, then he himself was in some danger. The United States believes that it alone pursues and indicts war criminals and "international terrorists"; nothing in its political or journalistic culture yet allows for the thought that it might be harboring and sheltering such a senior one. Yet the thought had very obliquely surfaced in Weiner's story, and Kissinger was a worried man when he called his editor that day to discuss the concluding volume of his memoirs (eventually published under the unbearably dull and self-regarding title *Years of Renewal*), which he was still in progress.

"Harboring and sheltering," though, are understatements for the lavishness of Henry Kissinger's circumstances. His advice is sought, in person and on appearance, by audiences of businessmen and academics and policymakers. His turgid newspaper column is syndicated by the *Los Angeles Times* and appears as far afield as the *Washington Post*. His first volume of memoirs was in part written, and also edited, by Harold Evans, who with Tina Brown is among the many hosts and hostesses who solicit Kissinger's company, or perhaps one should say society, for their New York soirees. At different times, he has been a consultant to ABC News and CBS; his most successful diplomacy, indeed, has probably been conducted with the media (and his single greatest achievement has been to get almost everybody to call him "Doctor"). Fawned on by Ted Koppel, sought out by corporations and despots with "image" problems or "failures of communication," and given respectful attention by presidential candidates and those whose task it is to "mold" their global vision, this man wants for little in the pathetic universe that the "self-esteem" industry exists to serve. Of whom else would Norman Podhoretz write, in a bended-knee encomium to the second volume of Kissinger's memoirs, *Years of Upheaval*:

> What we have here is writing of the very highest order. It is writing that is equally at ease in portraiture and abstract analysis; that can shape a narrative as skillfully as it can paint a scene; that can achieve marvels of compression while moving at an expansive and leisurely pace. It is writing that can shift without strain or falsity of tone from the *gravitas* befitting a book about great historical events to the humor and irony dictated by an unfailing sense of human proportion.

A critic who can suck like that, as was once dryly said by one of my moral tutors, need never dine alone. Nor need his subject. Except that, every now and then, the recipient (and donor) of so much sycophancy feels a tremor of anxiety. He leaves the well-furnished table and scurries to the bathroom. Is it perhaps another disclosure on a newly released Nixon tape? Some stray news from Indonesia portending the fall or imprisonment of another patron (and perhaps the escape of an awkward document or two)? The arrest or indictment of a torturer or assassin; the expiry of the statute of secrecy for some obscure cabinet papers in a faraway country? Any one of these can instantly spoil his day. As we see from the Korda tape, Kissinger cannot open the morning paper with the assurance of tranquillity. Because he knows what others can only suspect, or guess at. And he is a prisoner of the knowledge, as, to some extent, are we.

Notice the likable way in which Michael Korda demonstrates his broad-mindedness with the Cambodia jest. Everybody "knows," after all, that Kissinger inflicted terror and misery and mass death on that country, and great injury to the United States Constitution at the same time. (Everybody also "knows" that other vulnerable nations can lay claim to the same melancholy and hateful distinction as Cambodia, with incre-

mental or "collateral" damage [illegible]
they keep the price.) Yet the p[illegible]
a black tie at the Vogue party [illegible]
man who ordered and sanctioned the k[illegible]
of civilian populations, the [illegible]
convenient politicians, the kidnapping and disappearance of soldiers and journalists [illegible]
who got in his way. Oh, but he *is*. He's exactly the same man. And that may be among the most nauseating reflections of all. Kissinger is [illegible]
and feted because of his exquisite [illegible]
mordant wit (this mistakes [illegible]
gross, and his wit consists of a [illegible]
and secondhand darts). No, he is sought after because his presence supplies a frisson, the authentic touch of raw and unapologetic [illegible]
a slight guilty nervousness on the [illegible]
gag about the indescribable sufferings of Indochina. And I've noticed, time and again, standing at the back of the audience during Kissinger speeches, that laughter of the nervous, once [illegible]
of laughter he likes to provoke [illegible]
tribute, he flaunts not the "aphrodisiac" of power (another of his plagiarized bons mots) but its pornography.

DRESS REHEARSAL: THE SECRET OF '68

There exists, within the political [illegible] Washington, D.C., an open secret that is too momentous and too awful to tell. Although it is well known to academic historians, senior reporters, former [illegible]
bers, and ex-diplomats, it has never been summarized all at one time in [illegible]
reason for this is, on first viewing, paradoxical. The open secret is in the [illegible]
jor political parties, and it directly implicates the past statecraft of at least three former presidencies. Thus, its full disclosure would be in the interest of no particular faction. It [illegible]
fore the guarantee of its obscurity; it lies like Poe's "purloined letter" [illegible]
signifies bipartisanship.

Here is the secret in plain words. [illegible]
1968, Richard Nixon and some of his emissaries and underlings set out to sabotage the Paris peace negotiations on Vietnam. [illegible]
were simple: they privately assured the South Vietnamese military rulers that an incoming Republican regime would offer them [illegible]
than would a Democratic one. [illegible]
undercut both the talks themselves and the electoral strategy of Vice President Hubert Humphrey. The tactic "worked," in that the South Vietnamese junta withdrew from the talks on the eve of the election, thereby destroying the peace initiative on which the Democrats had based their campaign. In another way, it did not "work."

THE PUDGY MAN AT THE VOGUE PARTY IS NOT, SURELY, THE MAN WHO DESTROYED CIVILIAN POPULATIONS

[illegible]
four years on Indochinese society, and on American democracy, is beyond computation. The [illegible]
subsequent slaughter, was Henry Kissinger.

[illegible]
"conspiracy theory." I happily accept the challenge. [illegible]
renowned conspirator (and theorist of conspira- [illegible]
because on the logical inference of "evidence against interest" it is improbable that Mr. Haldeman would supply evidence of his knowledge of a crime, unless he was (posthumously) telling the truth. Second, because it is possible to trace [illegible]

In January 1973, the Nixon-Kissinger Administration [illegible]
D.C., the web of evidence against the Watergate burglars and buggers was beginning to lengthen. On January 8, 1973, Haldeman records:

[illegible]

Three days later, on January 11, 1973, Halde- [illegible]

> [Murray] Chotiner [a former press secretary, then working with associates for Nixon] got LBJ to use his influence to get rid of the Hill investigation with Cahlano, Hubert, and so on. Later in the day, he decided that wasn't such a good idea, and told me not to do it, which I fortunately hadn't done.

On the same day, Haldeman reports Henry Kissinger calling excitedly from Paris, saying "he'll do the signing in Paris rather than Hanoi, which is the key thing." He speaks also of getting South Vietnam's President Thieu to "go along." On the following day

> The P also got back on the Watergate thing today, making the point that I should talk to Connally about the Johnson bugging process to get his judgment as to how to handle it. He wonders if we shouldn't just have Andreas go in and scare Hubert. The problem in going at LBJ is how he'd react, and we need to find out from [Deke] DeLoach who did it, and then run a lie detector on him. I talked to Mitchell on the phone on this subject and he said DeLoach had told him he was up to date on the thing because he had a call from Texas. A *Star* reporter was making an inquiry in the last week or so, and LBJ got very hot and called Deke and said to him that if the Nixon people are going to play with this, that he would release *[deleted material—national security]*, saying that our side was asking that certain things be done. By our side, I assume he means the Nixon campaign organization. De Loach took this as a direct threat from Johnson. . . . As he recalls it, bugging was requested on the planes, but was turned down, and all they did was check the phone calls, on [quite a tap on the Dragon Lady [Mrs. Anna Chennault]

THERE HAD TO BE AN INFORMANT INSIDE JOHNSON'S CAMP. THAT INFORMANT WAS HENRY KISSINGER

This bureaucratic prose may be hard to read, but it needs no cipher to decode itself. Under intense pressure about the bugging of the Watergate buildings, Nixon instructed his chief of staff, Haldeman, and his FBI contact, Deke DeLoach, to unmask the bugging to which his own campaign had been subjected in 1968. He also sounded out former president Johnson, through former senior Democrats like Texas governor John Connally, to gauge what his reaction to the disclosure might be. The aim was to show that "everybody does it." (By another bipartisan paradox, in Washington the slogan "they all do it" is used as a slogan for the defense rather than, as one might hope, for the prosecution.)

However, a problem presents itself at once: how to reveal the 1968 bugging without at the same time revealing what that bugging had been about. Hence the second thoughts ("wasn't such a good idea . . ."). In his excellent introduction to *The Haldeman Diaries*, Nixon's biographer Professor Stephen Ambrose characterizes the 1973 approach to Lyndon Johnson as "prospective blackmail," designed to exert backstairs pressure to close down a congressional inquiry. But he also suggests that Johnson, himself no pushover, had some blackmail ammunition of his own. As Professor Ambrose phrases it, the *Diaries* had been vetted by the National Security Council, and the bracketed deletion cited above is "the only place in the book where an example is given of a deletion by the NSC during the Carter Administration." "Eight days later Nixon was inaugurated for his second term," Ambrose relays. "Ten days later Johnson died of a heart attack. What Johnson had on Nixon I suppose we'll never know."

The professor's conclusion here is arguably too tentative. There is a well-understood principle known as "Mutual Assured Destruction," whereby both sides possess more than enough material with which to annihilate the other. The answer to the question of what the Johnson Administration "had" on Nixon is a relatively easy one. It was given in a book entitled *Counsel to the President*, published in 1991. Its author was Clark Clifford, the quintessential blue-chip Washington insider, who was assisted in the writing by Richard Holbrooke, the former assistant secretary of state and current ambassador to the United Nations. In 1968, Clark Clifford was secretary of defense and Richard Holbrooke was a member of the American negotiating team at the Vietnam peace talks in Paris.

From his seat in the Pentagon, Clifford had been able to read the intelligence transcripts that picked up and recorded what he terms a "secret personal channel" between President Thieu in Saigon and the Nixon campaign. The chief interlocutor at the American end was John Mitchell, then Nixon's campaign manager and subsequently attorney general (and subsequently Prisoner Number 24171-157 in the Maxwell Air Force Base prison camp). He was actively assisted by Madame Anna Chennault, known to all as the "Dragon Lady." A fierce veteran of the Taiwan lobby, and all-purpose right-wing intriguer, she was a social and political force in the Washington of her day and would rate her own biography.

Clifford describes a private meeting at which he, President Johnson, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, and National Security Adviser Walt Rostow were present. Hawkish to a man, they kept Vice President Humphrey out of the loop. But, hawkish as they were, they were appalled at the evidence of Nixon's treachery. They nonetheless decided not to go public with what they knew. Clifford says that this was because the disclosure would have ruined the Paris talks altogether. He could have

added that it would have created "a crisis of confidence in American institutions." There are some things that the voters can't be trusted to know. And even though the bugging had been legal, it might not have looked like fair play. (The Logan Act flatly prohibits any American from conducting private diplomacy with a foreign power.)

In the event, Thieu pulled out of the negotiations anyway, running them just three days before the election. Clifford is in no doubt of the advice on which he did so:

> The activities of the Nixon team went far beyond the bounds of justifiable political dissent. It constituted direct interference in the activities of the executive branch and the responsibilities of the Chief Executive, the only people with authority to negotiate on behalf of the nation. The activities of the Nixon campaign constituted a gross, even potentially illegal, interference in the security affairs of the nation by private individuals.

Perhaps aware of the slight feebleness of his lawyerly prose, and perhaps a little ashamed of keeping the secret for his memoirs rather than sharing it with the electorate, Clifford adds in a footnote:

> It should be remembered that the public was considerably more innocent in such matters in the days before the Watergate burglary and the 1975 Senate investigation of the CIA.

Perhaps the public was indeed more innocent, if only because of the insider reticence of white-shoe lawyers like Clifford, who thought there were some things too profane to be made known. He claims now that he was in favor either of confronting Nixon privately with the information and forcing him to desist, or else of making it public. Perhaps this was indeed his view.

A more wised-up age of investigative reporting has brought us several updates on this appalling episode. And so has the very guarded memoir of Richard Nixon himself. More than one "back channel" was required for the Republican destabilization of the Paris peace talks. There had to be secret communications between Nixon and the South Vietnamese, as we have seen. But there also had to be an informant inside the incumbent administration's camp, a source of hints and tips and early warnings of official intentions. That informant was Henry Kissinger. In his own memoir *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, the former elder statesman tells us that, in mid-September 1968, he received private word of a planned bombing halt. In other words, the Johnson administration would, for the sake of the negotiations, consider suspending its aerial bombardment



Richard Nixon was underwritten by the Republican Party machine, led by Averell Harriman, considered Kissinger to be almost one of themselves. He had made himself helpful to Rockefeller's chief foreign-policy adviser, by supplying French intermediaries with data on [illegible] Hanoi. "Henry was discreet, pointing out that the government we were anticipating [illegible] negotiations with," [illegible] Walter Isaacson. "We trusted him. It is not stretching the truth to say that the [illegible]."

So the likelihood of a bombing halt, wrote Nixon, "came as no real surprise to me." He added "[illegible] or his desire to keep his role completely confidential" [illegible] [illegible] luding with a foreign power. Thus began what [illegible] rected simultaneously at thwarting the talks and embarrassing the Hubert Humphrey campaign.

[illegible] returned from Paris, where he had picked up word

avoid any new ideas or proposals." On the same day, Nixon declined a challenge from Humphrey [illegible] debate. On October 12, Kissinger once [illegible] made contact, suggesting that a bombing halt might be announced as soon as October 23. [illegible] might have been. Except that for some reason, every time the North Vietnamese side came closer to agreement, the South Vietnamese increased their own demands. We now know why and how that was, and how the two halves of the strategy were knit together. As far back as July, Nixon had met quietly in New York with the South Vietnamese ambassador, Bui Diem. The contact had been arranged by Anna Chennault. Bugging of the South Vietnamese offices in Washington, and surveillance of the "Dragon Lady," showed how the ratchet operated. An intercepted cable from Diem to President Thieu on the fateful day of October 23 had him saying: "Many Republican friends have contacted me and en-

A NOTE ON THE "40 COMMITTEE"

In these pages, I've found it essential to allude frequently to the "40 Committee," the semi-clandestine body of which Henry Kissinger was the chairman between 1969 and 1976. One does not need to picture some giant, octopus-like organization at the center of a web of conspiracy; however, it is important to know that there was a committee that maintained ultimate supervision over United States covert actions overseas (and, possibly, at home) during this period.

The CIA was originally set up by President Harry Truman at the beginning of the Cold War. In the first Eisenhower Administration, it was felt necessary to establish a monitoring or watchdog body to oversee covert operations. This panel was known as the Special Group, and sometimes also referred to as the 54/12 Group, after the number of the National Security Council directive that set it up. By the time of President Johnson it was called the 303 Committee, and during the Nixon and Ford administrations it was called the 40 Committee. Some believe that these changes of name reflect the numbers of later NSC directives; others, the successive room numbers in the handsome Old Executive Office Building, now annexed to the neighboring White House, in which it met. In fact, NSC Memorandum 40 was named after the room in which the committee met. No mystery there.

If any fantastic rumors shroud the work of the committee, this may be the outcome of the absurd cult of secrecy that at one point surrounded it. At Senate hearings in 1973, Senator Stuart Symington was questioning William Colby, then director of central intelligence, about the origins and evolution of the supervisory group:

SYMINGTON: Very well. What is the name of the latest committee of this character?

COLBY: 40 Committee.

SYMINGTON: Who is the chairman?

COLBY: Well, again, I would prefer to go into executive session on the description of the 40 Committee, Mr. Chairman.

SYMINGTON: As to who is the chairman, you would prefer an executive session?

COLBY: The chairman—all right, Mr. Chairman—Dr. Kissinger is the chairman, as the assistant to the president for national security affairs.

Kissinger held this position ex officio, in other words. His colleagues at the time were Air Force General George Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; William P. Clements Jr., the deputy secretary of defense; Joseph Sisco, the undersecretary of state for political affairs, and the director of central intelligence, William Colby.

With slight variations, those holding these positions have been the permanent members of the 40 Committee that, as President Ford phrased it in a rare public reference by a president to the group's existence, "reviews every covert operation undertaken by our government." An important variation was added by President Nixon, who appointed his former campaign manager and attorney general, John Mitchell, to sit on the committee, the only attorney general to have done so. The founding charter of the CIA prohibits it from taking any part in domestic operations: in January 1975, Attorney General Mitchell was convicted of numerous counts of perjury, obstruction, and conspiracy to cover up the Watergate burglary, which was carried out in part by former CIA operatives. He became the first attorney general to serve time in prison.

We have met Mr. Mitchell, in concert with Mr. Kissinger, before. The usefulness of this note, I hope and believe, is that it supplies a thread that will be found throughout this narrative. Whenever any major U.S. covert undertaking occurred, between the years 1969 and 1976, Henry Kissinger may be at least presumed to have had direct knowledge of, and responsibility for, it. If he claims that he did not, then he is claiming not to have been doing a job to which he clung with great bureaucratic tenacity. And whether or not he cares to accept the responsibility, the accountability is inescapably his.

couraged us to stand firm. They were alarmed by press reports to the effect that you had already softened your position." The exact opposite instructions went to one Cynthia Dekoch, known as "Deke" to his associates, who was J. Edgar Hoover's FBI liaison officer to the White House. We met him, you may recall, in H. R. Haldeman's *Diaries*.

In 1999 the author Anthony Summers was finally able to gain access to the closed FBI file of intercepts of the Nixon campaign, which he published in his 2000 book, *The Arrogance of Power: The Secret World of Richard Nixon*. He was also able to interview Anna Chennault. These two breakthroughs furnished him with what is vulgarly termed a "smoking gun" on the 1968 conspiracy. By the end of October 1968, John Mitchell had become so nervous about official surveillance that he ceased taking calls from Chennault. And President Johnson, in a conference call to the three candidates, Nixon, Humphrey, and Wallace (allegedly to brief them on the bombing halt), had strongly implied that he knew about the covert efforts to stymie his Vietnam diplomacy. This call created near-panic in Nixon's inner circle and caused Mitchell to telephone Chennault at the Sheraton Park Hotel. He then asked her to call him back on a more secure line. "Anna," he told her, "I'm speaking on behalf of Mr. Nixon. It's very important that our Vietnamese friends understand our Republican position, and I hope you made that clear to them. . . . Do you think they really have decided not to go to Paris?"

The reproduced FBI original document shows what happened next. On November 2, 1968, the agent reported:

[redacted]
FROM NEW MEXICO.

Nixon's running mate, Spiro Agnew, had been campaigning in Albuquerque, New Mexico, that day, and subsequent intelligence analysis revealed that he and another member of his staff [illegible] principally concerned with Vietnam) had indeed been in touch with the Chennault camp.

The beauty of having Kissinger leaking from one side and Anna Chennault and John Mitchell conducting a private foreign policy on the other was this: It enabled Nixon to avoid being drawn into the argument over [illegible] further enabled him to sugg[illegible]

[illegible] of activity is a cynical, last-minute attempt by [illegible] Mr. Humphrey. The [illegible]

[illegible] play both ends against the middle. In the late summer of 1968, on Martha's Vineyard, he had offered [illegible] Professor Samuel Huntington, [illegible] Hubert Humphrey. But when Huntington, [illegible] league and friend Zbigniew Brzezinski tried to get him [illegible] Kissinger became shy. "I've hated Nixon for years," he told Brzezinski, but the time wasn't quite ripe for a switchover. Indeed, it was a very close-run election, turning in the end on right-[illegible] hundred thousand votes, and many hardened observers believe that the final difference was made when Johnson ordered a bombing halt on October 31 and the South Vietnamese made him look like a fool by boycotting the peace talks two days later. Had things gone the other way, of course, Kissinger was a near certainty for a senior job in a Humphrey administration.

With slight differences of emphasis, the [illegible] precedent of this story appear in Haldeman's work cited and in Clifford's memoir. They are also partially rehearsed in President Johnson's autobiography, *The Vantage Point*, and in a long reflection on Indochina by William Bundy (one of the architects of the war) entitled rather tritely *The Tangled Web*. Senior members of the press corps, among them Jules Witcover in his history of 1968, Seymour Hersh in his study of Kissinger, and Walter Isaacson, editor of *Time* magazine, in his admiring but critical biography, have produced almost congruent accounts of the same dismal episode. The only mention of it that is completely and utterly false, by any literary or historical standard, appears in the memoirs of Henry Kissinger himself. He writes that [illegible]

[illegible] Humphrey [illegible]

[illegible] of the man who, having won the 1968 election by [illegible] conducted [illegible] first [illegible] One might not want to arbitrate a men[illegible] between the two men, but [illegible] once, briefly and awkwardly, met Henry

Kissinger in person. He clearly formed his estimate [illegible] from more persuasive expe[illegible] than that. "One factor that had most con[illegible]ed me of Kissinger's credibility," wrote Nixon later in his own delicious prose, "was the length to which he went to protect his secrecy."

That ghastly secret is now out. In the January 1969 issue of the Establishment house organ *Foreign Affairs*, published a few days after his appointment as Nixon's right-hand man, there appeared Henry Kissinger's own evaluation of the Vietnam negotiations. On every point of substance, he agreed with the line taken in Paris by the Johnson-Humphrey negotiators. One has to pause for an instant to comprehend the enormity of this. Kissinger had helped elect a man who had surreptitiously promised the South Vietnamese junta a better deal than they would get from the Democrats. The Saigon au-



thorities then acted, as Bundy ruefully confirms, as if they did indeed have a deal. This meant, in the words of a later Nixon slogan, "Four More Years." But four more years of an unwinnable and undeclared and murderous war, which was to spread before it burned out, and was to end on the same terms and conditions as had been on the table in the fall of 1968.

This was what it took to promote Henry Kissinger. To promote him from a mediocre and opportunistic academic to an international potentate. The signature qualities were there from the inaugural moment: the sycophancy and the duplicity; the power worship and the absence of [illegible] by empty scolding of old non-friends for new non-friends. And the distinctive effects were also present: the uncounted and expendable corpses; the official and unofficial lying about the cost; the heavy and pompous pseudo-indignation when unwelcome questions were asked. Kissinger's global career started as it meant to go on. It debauched the American republic and American democracy, and it levied a hideous toll of casualties on weaker and more vulnerable societies.

THE CRIME OF WAR, AND BOMBING FOR VOTES

Even while compelled to concentrate on brute realities, one must never lose sight of that element of the surreal that surrounds Henry Kissinger. Paying a visit to Vietnam in the middle 1960s, when many technocratic opportunists were still convinced that the war was worth fighting and could be won, the young Henry reserved judgment on the first point but developed considerable private doubts on the second. He had gone so far as to involve himself with an initiative that extended to direct personal contact with Hanoi. He became friendly with two Frenchmen who had a direct line to the Communist leadership in North Vietnam's capital. Raymond Aubrac, a French civil servant who was a friend of Ho Chi Minh, and Herbert Marcovich, a French microbiologist, began a series of trips to North Vietnam. On their return, they briefed Kissinger in Paris. He in his turn parlayed their information into high-level conversations in Washington, relaying the actual or potential negotiating positions of Pham Van Dong and other Communist statesmen to Defense Secretary Robert McNamara. (In the result, the relentless bombing of the North made any "bridge-building" impracticable. In particular, the now forgotten American destruction of the Paul Doumer Bridge outraged the Vietnamese side.)

This weightless mid-position, which ultimately helped enable his double act in 1968, allowed Kissinger to ventriloquize Governor Rockefeller and to propose, by indirect means, a future détente with America's chief rivals. In his first major address as a candidate for the Republican nomination in 1968, Rockefeller spoke ringingly of how "in a subtle triangle with Communist China and the Soviet Union, we can ultimately improve our relations with *each* as we test the will for peace of *both*." [*Italics added.*]

This foreshadowing of a later Kissinger strategy might appear at first reading to illustrate prescience. But Governor Rockefeller had no more reason than Vice President Humphrey to suppose that his ambitious staffer would defect to the Nixon camp, risking and postponing this same détente in order later to take credit for a debased simulacrum of it.

Morally speaking, Kissinger treated the concept

of superpower rapprochement in the same way it treated the concept of a negotiated settlement in Vietnam—as something contingent on its own needs. There was a time to feign support for it and a time to denounce it as weak-minded and treacherous. And there was a time to take credit for it. Some of those who "followed orders" in Indochina may lay a claim to that notoriously weak defense. Some who even resisted the call for war may now tell us that they were activists merely at the time. But Kissinger cannot avail himself of this alibi. He always knew what he was doing, and he embarked upon a second round of protracted warfare having knowingly helped to destroy an alternative that he always understood was possible. This increases the gravity of the charge against him. It also prepares us for his improvised and retrospective defense against that charge: that his immense depredations eventually led to "peace." When he announced that "peace is at hand" in October 1972, he made a boastful and false claim that could have been made in 1968. And when he claimed credit for subsequent superpower contacts, he was announcing the result of a secret and corrupt diplomacy that had originally been proposed as an open and democratic one. In the meantime, he had illegally eavesdropped and shadowed American citizens and public servants whose misgivings about the war, and about unconstitutional authority, were mild compared with those of Messieurs Vorbrac and Marchevich. In establishing what lawyers call the motive to act, we can say that in Kissinger's case he was fully aware of, and is entirely accountable for, his own actions.

Upon taking office at Richard Nixon's side in the winter of 1969, it was Kissinger's task to be *primus inter pares* but *not* in two respects. He had to concoct a rationale of "credibility" to prioritize action in an already devastated Vietnamese theater, and he had to second his principal's wish that he form part of a "wall" between the Nixon White House and the Department of State. The term "two track" was later to become commonplace. Kissinger's position on both tracks, of promiscuous violence abroad and flagrant illegality at home, was decided from the start. He does not seem to have lacked relish for either commitment; one hopes faintly that this was not the first twinge of the "aphrodisiac."

President Johnson's "bombing halt" had not lasted long by any standard, even if one remembers that its original conciliatory purpose had been sordidly undercut. Averell Harriman, who had been LBJ's chief negotiator in Paris, later testified to Congress that the North Vietnamese had withdrawn 90 percent of their forces from the northern two provinces of South Vietnam in October and November 1968, in accordance

[illegible]

ness, or even as a "light at the end of the tunnel."

[illegible]

lowing of a consistent thread. Once the war had been unnaturally and undemocratically prolonged, [illegible] ed to justify it. Let us take four connected cases in which the civilian population was deliberately [illegible] the customary laws of war and neutrality were violated, and in which conscious lies had to be told in order to conceal the [illegible]

What convinced Nixon of Henry's credibility: "the length to which he went to protect his secrecy"

The first such case is an example of what Vietnam might have been spared had not the 1968 Paris peace talks been sabotaged. In December 1967, [illegible] information" [illegible] Johnson and Nixon administrations, the United States military command turned to what General Creighton Abrams termed "total war" against the "infrastructure" of the Vietcong. [illegible] counterfeit food and [illegible]. The chief exhibit in this campaign was the [illegible] presence of [illegible]. The code name for the sweep was Operation "Speedy Express."

It might, in some realm of theory, be remotely conceivable that such tactics could be justified under the international laws and charters governing the [illegible] of retaliation. But no [illegible] and annihilating force described below would be likely to find itself on the defensive. And it would [illegible] on its own soil. So the Nixon-Kissinger Administration was not, except in one unusual sense, [illegible] From his roost at Nixon's side he describes a [illegible]

[illegible]

One could hardly wish for it to be more plainly put than that. (And put, furthermore, by one of Kissinger's chief partisans with no wish to discredit [illegible] election.) But in point of fact, Kissinger himself admits to almost as much in his own first volume of memoirs, *The White House Years*. The context is a meeting with General de Gaulle, in which the old warrior demanded to know by what right the Nixon Administration subjected Indochina to devastating bombardment. In his own account, Kissinger replies that "a sudden withdrawal might give us a credibility problem." (When asked "where?" Kissinger hazily proposed the Middle East.) It is important to bear in mind that the future flatterer of Brezhnev and Mao was in no real position to claim that he made war in Indochina to thwart either. He certainly did not dare try such a callow excuse on Charles de Gaulle. And indeed, the proponent of secret deals with China was in no very strong position to claim that he was combating Stalinism in general. No, it all came down to "credibility" and to the saving of face. It is known that 20,763 American, 109,230 South Vietnamese, and 496,260 North Vietnamese servicemen lost their lives in Indochina between the day that Nixon and Kissinger took office and the day in 1973 that they withdrew American forces and accepted the logic of 1968. Must the families of these victims confront the fact that the chief "faces" at risk were those of Nixon and Kissinger?

> WE WERE NOT MEANT TO KNOW THAT THE U.S. WAS IN VIETNAM AS EARLY AS 1959 OR AS LATE AS 1975

Thus the colloquially titled "Christmas bombing" of North Vietnam, continued after that election had been won, must be counted as a war crime by any standard. The bombing was not conducted for anything that could be described as "military reasons" but for twofold political ones. The first of these was domestic: a show of strength to extremists in Congress and a means of putting the Democratic Party on the defensive. The second was to persuade South Vietnamese leaders such as President Thieu—whose intransigence had been encouraged by Kissinger in the first place—that their objections to American withdrawal were too nervous. This, again, was the mortgage on the initial secret payment of 1968.

When the unpreventable collapse occurred in Cambodia and Vietnam, in April and May 1975, [illegible] inevitably higher than it would have [illegible] previously. These locust years [illegible] Kissinger with a display of bravado and deceit. On May 12, 1975, in the immediate aftermath of the Khmer Rouge seizure of power, Cambodian gunboats detained an American merchant vessel named the *Mayaguez*. The ship was stopped in international waters claimed by Cambodia and then taken to the Cambodian island of Koh Tang. In spite of reports that the crew had been released, Kissinger pressed for an immediate face-saving and "credibility"-enhancing strike. He persuaded President Gerald Ford, the untried and undistinguished successor to his deposed former boss, to send in the Marines and the Air Force. Out of a Marine force of 110, 18 were killed and 50 were wounded. Twenty-three Air Force men died in a crash. The United States used a 15,000-ton bomb on the island, the most powerful nonnuclear device that it possessed. Nobody has the figures for Cambodian deaths. The casualties were pointless, because the ship's company of the *Mayaguez* were nowhere on Koh Tang, having been released some hours earlier. A subsequent congressional inquiry found that Kissinger could have known of this by listening to Cambodian broadcasting or by paying attention to a third-party government that had been negotiating a deal for the restitution of the crew and the ship. It was not as if any Cambodians doubted, by that month of 1975, the willingness of the U.S. government to employ deadly force.

In Washington, D.C., there is a famous and hallowed memorial to the American dead of the Vietnam War. Known as the "Vietnam Veterans Memorial," it bears a name that is slightly misleading. I was present for the extremely affecting moment of its dedication in 1982 and noticed that the list of nearly 60,000 names is incised in the wall not by alphabet but by date. The first few names appear in 1959 and the last few in 1975. The more historically minded visitors can sometimes be heard to say that they didn't know the United States was engaged in Vietnam as early or as late as that. Nor was the public supposed to know. The first names are of the covert operatives, sent in by Colonel Edward Lansdale without congressional approval to support French colonialism. The last names are of those thrown away in the *Mayaguez* fiasco. It took Henry Kissinger to ensure that a war of atrocity, which he had helped to prolong, should end as furtively and ignominiously as it had begun.

A SAMPLE OF CASES: KISSINGER'S WAR CRIMES IN INDOCHINA

Some statements are too blunt for everyday, consensual discourse. In national "debate," it is the smoother pebbles that are customarily gathered from the stream and used as projectiles. They leave less of a scar, even when they hit. Occasionally, however, a single hard-edged remark will inflict a deep and jagged wound,

a gash so ugly that it must be [illegible]. In January 1971 there was [illegible] ment from General Telford Taylor, [illegible] chief U.S. prosecuting counsel at the Nuremberg trials. Reviewing the legal [illegible] those hearings, and also the Tokyo trials of Japanese war criminals and the Manila trial of Emperor Hirohito's chief militarist, General Yamashita Tomoyuki, Taylor said that if the standard of Nuremberg and Manila were applied evenly, and applied to the American statesmen and bureaucrats who designed the war in Vietnam, then "there would be a very strong possibility that they would come to the same end [Yamashita] did." It is not every day that a senior American soldier and jurist delivers the opinion that a large portion of his country's political class should probably be hooded and blindfolded and dropped through a trapdoor on the end of a rope.

In his book *Nuremberg and Vietnam*, General Taylor also anticipated one of the possible objections to this legal and moral conclusion. It might be argued for the defense, he said, that those arraigned did not really know what they were doing; in other words, that they had achieved the foulest results but from the highest and most innocent motives. The notion of Indochina as some [illegible] ness "quagmire" of ignorant armies has been sedulously propagated, then and since, in order to make such a euphemism appear plausible. Taylor had no patience with such a view. American military and intelligence and economic and political teams had been in Vietnam, he wrote, for much too long to attribute anything they did "to lack of information." It must [illegible] sible for soldiers and diplomats to pose as innocents until the middle of the 1960s, but after that time, and especially after the My Lai massacre of March 16, 1968, when serving veterans reported major atrocities to their [illegible] nobody could reasonably claim [illegible] informed, and of those who could, the [illegible] lievable would be those who [illegible] fusion of battle—read and discussed and [illegible] the panoptic reports of the war that were [illegible] ered to Washington.

tent of, for example, the bombing of Laos and [illegible] trix of legal and criminal responsibility [illegible] to arrive at some indisputable conclusions. The first of these concerned the particular obligation [illegible] the United States to be aware of, and to respect, [illegible]

ten reflected the logical shortcomings of compromise, [illegible]



FORMER IMPERIAL CITY OF HUE, SOUTH VIETNAM, AFTER AMERICAN AIR FORCE BOMBING, 1968

[illegible] the war crimes trials, one thing is [illegible]. At their conclusion, the United States [illegible] legally, politically and morally [illegible] to the principles enunciated in the charters and judgments of the tribunals. The President of the United States, on the recommendation of the Departments of State, War and Justice, approved the war crimes programs. Thirty or more American judges, drawn from the appellate benches of the states from Massachusetts to Oregon, and Minnesota to Georgia, conducted the later Nuremberg trials and wrote the opinions. General Douglas MacArthur, under authority of the Far Eastern Commission, established the Tokyo tribunal and confirmed the sentences it imposed, and it was under his authority as the highest American military officer in



RICHARD NIXON AND HENRY KISSINGER WITH ALEXANDER HAIG AT CAMP DAVID, [illegible]

the Far East that the Yamashita and other such proceedings were held. The United States delegation to the United Nations presented the resolution by which the General Assembly endorsed the Nuremberg principles.

Thus the authority of the nation is staked on those principles, and today the question is how they apply to our conduct of the war in Vietnam, and whether the United States Government is prepared to face the consequences of their application.

In forming and contesting these consequences himself, General Taylor took issue with another United States officer, Colonel William Corson, who had written that

> "[r]egardless of the outcome of . . . the My Lai courts-martial and other legal actions, the point remains that [illegible] judgment to the effective prosecution [illegible] was only those committed [illegible] the atrocities alleged or otherwise, are the result of a failure of judgment, not criminal behavior."

[illegible] Taylor responded

> [illegible] Corson overlooks [illegible], that negligent [illegible] criminally responsible. Judgment other than criminal. Perhaps he is right in the strictly [illegible] Code, but there has been no failure of judgment, the occasion for criminal conduct would not have arisen. The Germans in occupied Europe made gross errors of judgement which undoubtedly created the conditions in which the slaughter of the inhabitants of Klissura [a Greek village annihilated during the occupation] occurred, but that did not make the killings any the less criminal.

Referring this question to the chain of command in the field, General Taylor noted further that the senior officer corps had been

> more or less constantly in Vietnam, and splendidly equipped with helicopters and other aircraft, which gave them a degree of mobility unprecedented in earlier wars, and consequently endowed them with every opportunity to keep the course of the fighting and its consequences under close and constant observation. Communications were generally rapid and efficient, so that the flow of information and orders was unimpeded.
>
> These circumstances are in sharp contrast to those that confronted General Yamashita in 1944 and 1945, with his troops reeling back in disarray before the oncoming American military powerhouse. For Yamashita to control his forces so as to prevent the atrocities they committed, Brig. Gens. Egbert F. Ballene and Morris Handwerk and Maj. Gens. James A. Lester, Leo Donovan and Russel B. Reynolds found him guilty of violating the laws of war and sentenced him to death by hanging.

Nor did General Taylor omit the crucial link between the military command and its political supervision; again a much closer and more immediate relationship in the American-Vietnamese instance than in the Japanese-Filipino one, as the regular contact between, say, General Creighton Abrams and Henry Kissinger makes clear:

> How much the President and his close advisers in the White House, Pentagon and Foggy Bottom knew about the volume and cause of civilian casualties in Vietnam, and the physical devastation of the countryside, is speculative. Something was known, for the late John McNaughton (then Assistant Secretary of Defense) returned from the White House one day in 1967 with the message that "We seem to be proceeding on the assumption that the way to eradicate the Vietcong is to destroy all the village structures, defoliate all the jungles, and then cover the entire surface of South Vietnam with asphalt."

This was noticed (by Townsend Hoopes, a political antagonist of General Taylor's) before that metaphor had been extended into two new countries, Laos and Cambodia, without a declaration of war, a notification to Congress, or a warning to civilians to evacuate. But Taylor anticipated the Kissinger case in many ways when he recalled the trial of the Japanese statesman Koki Hirota,

> who served briefly as Prime Minister and for several years as Foreign Minister between 1933 and May, 1938, after which he held no office whatever. The

[illegible] Joseph McCombs

so-called "Rape of Nanking" [illegible] became known during the winter of [illegible] when Hirota was Foreign Minister. Upon receiving full reports of the atrocities, he demanded and received assurances from the War Ministry that [illegible] be stopped. But they continued [illegible] by [illegible] found Hirota guilty because he "failed in his duty in not meeting [illegible] the Cabinet's] immediate action be taken to put an end to the atrocities," and "was content to rely on assurances which he knew were not being implemented." On this basis, coupled with his conviction on the aggressive war charge, Hirota was sentenced to be hanged.

Melvin Laird, as secretary of defense during the first Nixon Administration, was prescient enough about the early bombings of Cambodia, and dubious enough about the legality or prudence of the intervention, to send a memo to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, asking, "Are steps being taken, on a continuing basis, to minimize the risk of striking Cambodian people and structures? If so, what are the steps? Are we reasonably sure such steps are effective?" No evidence has surfaced that Henry Kissinger, as national security adviser or secretary of state, ever sought even such modest reassurances. Indeed, there is much evidence of his deceiving Congress as to the true extent to which such assurances as were offered were deliberately false. Others involved — such as Robert McNamara; McGeorge Bundy, national security adviser to both Kennedy and Johnson; and William Colby — have since offered various degrees of apology or contrition or at least explanation. Henry Kissinger, never. General Taylor described the practice of air strikes against hamlets suspected of "harboring" Vietnamese guerrillas as "flagrant violations of the Geneva Convention on Civilian Protection which prohibits 'collective penalties,' and 'reprisals against protected persons,' and especially violations of the Rules of Land Warfare." He was writing before this atrocious precedent had been extended to reprisal raids that treated two whole countries — Laos and Cambodia — as if they were disposable hamlets.

For Henry Kissinger, no great believer in the boastful claims of the war makers in the first place, a special degree of responsibility attaches. Not only did he have good reason to know that field commanders were exaggerating [illegible] and claiming all dead bodies as enemy [illegible] a commonplace piece of knowledge after the spring of 1968 — but he also knew that the issue of the war had been settled politically [illegible] matically, for all intents and purposes, before he became national security adviser. Thus he had to know that every additional casualty, on either side, was not just a death but an avoidable death. With this knowledge, and with a strong set [illegible] the domestic and personal [illegible]

[illegible]

From a huge menu of possible examples, I have [illegible] that people [illegible] directly or [illegible] Laos and [illegible] Cambodia. [illegible] Lord Russell [illegible] protest [illegible] began.

My friend and colleague Seymour Hersh, [illegible] Cambodia [illegible] and secret [illegible] chief [illegible] Nixon [illegible] documents [illegible] the "pacification" component that [illegible] code name Phoenix in the closing days of the Johnson-Humphrey Administration, it was put into full effect in the first six months of 1969, when Henry Kissinger had assumed much authority over the conduct of the war. Their objective was the American disciplining, on behalf of the Thieu government, of the turbulent Mekong Delta province of Binh Dinh.

On January 22, 1968, Robert McNamara had told the Senate that "no regular North Vietnamese units" were deployed in the Delta, and no military intelligence documents have surfaced to

KISSINGER HAD TO KNOW THAT EVERY CASUALTY IN INDOCHINA AFTER 1968 WAS AVOIDABLE

undermine his claim, or that the denials of the Communist bureaucracy should be understood as part of the general incomprehensibility of resistance. Hanoi's subsequent will to conquer. The announced purpose of the "Phoenix" program, indeed, was to redeem many thousands of villagers from political control by the National Liberation Front (NLF), or "Vietcong" (VC). As Buckley found, and as his magazine, [illegible] partially disclosed in the [illegible] of June 19, 1972:

[illegible] civilians — perhaps as many as 5,000, according to one [illegible] massacre look trifling by comparison.

were the operation. And so it was. Cumulative statistics for "Speedy Express" show that 10,899 "enemy" were killed. In the month of March alone, "over 3,000 enemy troops were killed . . . which is the largest monthly total for any American division in the Vietnam War," said the division's official magazine. When asked to account for the enormous body counts, a division senior officer explained that helicopter gun crews often caught unarmed "enemy" in open fields. . . .

There is overwhelming evidence that virtually all the Viet Cong were well armed. Simple civilians were, of course, not armed. And the enormous discrepancy between the body count [11,000] and the number of captured weapons [748] is hard to explain except by the conclusion that many victims were unarmed innocent civilians. . . .

The people who still live in pacified Kien Hoa all have vivid recollections of the devastation that American firepower brought to their lives in early 1969. Virtually every person to whom I spoke had suffered in some way. "There were 5,000 people in our village before 1969, but there were none in 1970," one village elder told me. "The Americans destroyed every house with artillery, air strikes, or by burning them down with cigarette lighters. About 100 people were killed by bombing, others were wounded and others became refugees. Many were children killed by concussion from the bombs which their small bodies could not withstand, even if they were hiding underground."

Other officials, including the village police chief, corroborated the man's testimony. I could not, of course, reach every village. But in each of the many places where I went, the testimony was the same: 100 killed here, 200 killed there.

THE CHARGE OF KNOWINGLY KILLING CIVILIANS LEADS STRAIGHT TO THE DOCK AT NUREMBERG OR THE HAGUE

Other notes by Buckley and his friend and collaborator Alex Shimkin (a worker for International Voluntary Services who was later killed in the war) discovered the same evidence in hospital statistics. In March 1969, the hospital at Ben Tre reported 343 patients injured by "friendly" fire and 25 by "the enemy," an astonishing statistic for a government facility to record in a guerrilla war in which suspected membership in the Vietcong could mean death. And Buckley's own estimate for his magazine—of "perhaps as many as 2,500" deaths—more civilians in this one sweep—is an almost deliberate understatement of what he told a U.S. United States official, who actually said that "*at least* 5,000" of the dead "were what we call non-combatants"—a not too exacting distinction, as we have already seen, and as all [illegible] understood. [*Italics mine.*]

Well understood, that is to say, not just by those who opposed the war but by those who were conducting it. As one American official put it to Buckley,

> "The actions of the Ninth Division in inflicting civilian casualties were worse [than My Lai]. The sum total of what the 9th did was overwhelming. In sum, the horror was worse than My Lai. But with the 9th, the civilian casualties came in dribbles and were pieced out over a long time. And most of them were inflicted from the air and at night. Also, they were sanctioned by the command's insistence on high body-counts. . . . The result was an inevitable outcome of the unit's command policy."

The earlier sweep that had mopped up My Lai during Operation "Wheeler Wallawa" had also at the time counted all corpses as those of enemy soldiers, including the civilian population of the village, who were casually included in the mind-bending overall total of 10,000.

Confronted with this evidence, Buckley and Shimkin abandoned a lazy and customary usage and replaced it, in a cable to *Newsweek* headquarters in New York, with a more telling and scrupulous one. The problem was not "indiscriminate use of firepower" but "charges of quite *discriminating* use—as a matter of policy in populated areas." Even the former allegation is a gross violation of the Geneva Convention; the second charge leads straight to the dock in Nuremberg or The Hague.

Since General Creighton Abrams publicly praised the Ninth Division for its work, and drew attention wherever and whenever he could to the tremendous success of Operation "Speedy Express," we can be sure that the political leadership in Washington was not unaware. Indeed, the degree of micromanagement revealed in Kissinger's memoirs quite forbids the idea that anything of importance took place without his knowledge or permission.

Of nothing is this more true than his own individual involvement in the bombing and invasion of neutral Cambodia and Laos. Obsessed with the idea that Vietnamese intransigence could be traced to allies or resources external to Vietnam itself, or could be overcome by tactics of mass destruction, Kissinger at one point contemplated using thermonuclear weapons to obliterate the pass through which ran the railway link from North Vietnam to China, and at another stage considered bombing the dikes that prevented North Vietnam's irrigation system from flooding the country. Neither of these measures (reported respectively in Tad Szulc's history of Nixon-era diplomacy, *The Illusion of Peace*, and by Kissinger's former aide Roger Morris) was taken, which removes some potential war crimes from our bill of indictment but which also gives an indication of the regnant mentality. There

remained Cambodia and Laos, which supposedly concealed or protected North Vietnamese supply lines.

As in the cases postulated by General Telford Taylor, there is the crime of aggressive war and then there is the question of war crimes. In the postwar period, or the period governed by the U.N. Charter and its related and incorporated conventions, the United States under Democratic and Republican administrations had deemed even its closest allies the right to invade countries that allegedly gave shelter to their antagonists. Most famously, President Eisenhower exerted economic and diplomatic pressure at a high level to bring an end to the invasion of Egypt by Britain, France, and Israel in October 1956. (The British thought Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser should not control "their" Suez Canal, the French believed Nasser to be the inspiration and source of their troubles in Algeria, and the Israelis claimed that he played the same role in fomenting their difficulties with the Palestinians. The United States maintained that even if these propaganda fantasies were true, they would not retrospectively legalize an invasion of Egypt.) During the Algerian war of independence, the United States had also repudiated France's claimed right to attack a town in neighboring Tunisia that succored Algerian guerrillas, and in 1964, at the United Nations, Ambassador Adlai Stevenson had condemned the United Kingdom for attacking a town in Yemen that allegedly provided a rear guard for rebels operating in its then colony of Aden.

All this law and precedent was to be thrown to the winds when Nixon and Kissinger decided to aggrandize the notion of "hot pursuit" across the borders of Laos and Cambodia. As William Shawcross reported in his 1979 book, *Sideshow*, even before the actual territorial invasion of Cambodia, for example, and very soon after the accession of Nixon and Kissinger to power, a program of heavy bombardment of the country was prepared and executed in secret. One might with some revulsion call it a "menu" of bombardment, since the code names for the raids were "Breakfast," "Lunch," "Snack," "Dinner," and "Dessert." The raids were flown by B-52 bombers, which, it is important to note, fly at an altitude too high to be observed from the ground and can unload tonnages of high explosive; they give no warning of approach and are incapable of accuracy or discrimination. Between March 1969 and May 1970, 3,630 such raids were flown across the [illegible] frontier. The bombing campaign began as it was to go on—with full knowledge [illegible] civilians and flagrant deceit by Administration this precise respect.

To wit, a memorandum prepared by [illegible]

[illegible] bodian civilians; "Lunch" (Base Area 609), by 198 of them; "Snack" (Base Area 351), by 383; "Dinner" (Base Area 352), by 770; and "Dessert" (Base Area 740), [illegible] themselves to demonstrate that Kissinger must have been aware when he told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that areas of Cambodia selected for bombing were "unpopulated."

As a result of the expanded and intensified bombing campaigns, it has been officially estimated that as many as 350,000 civilians in Laos



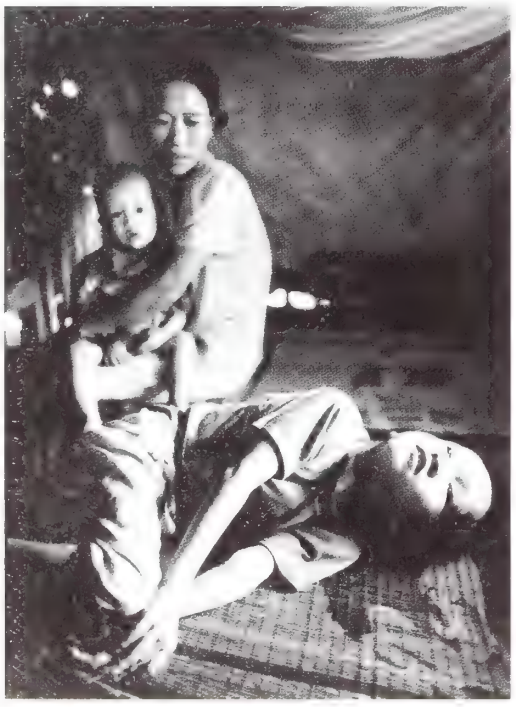
TAKING COVER FROM HEAVY FIGHTING,

and 600,000 in Cambodia lost their lives. (These are not the highest estimates.) Figures for refugees are several multiples of that. In addition, the [illegible] chemical defoliants created a massive health crisis that naturally fell [illegible] children, nursing mothers, the aged, and the already infirm. That crisis persists [illegible]

Although this appalling war, and its appalling [illegible] created [illegible] moral and political crisis for American institutions for at least five United States presidents, [illegible] responsibility for [illegible] Richard Nixon, as commander in chief, bore [illegible] responsibility and only narrowly [illegible]

[illegible] of impeachment, the promulgation of White [illegible] eventually compelled his resignation. But his deputy and closest adviser, Henry Kissinger, was sometimes forced, and sometimes forced himself, into a position of virtual co-presidency where Indochina was concerned.

For example, in the preparations for the invasion of Cambodia in 1970, Kissinger was caught between the views of his staff—several of whom resigned in protest when the invasion began—and his need to please his president. His president listened more to his two criminal associates—John Mitchell and Bebe Rebozo—than he did to his secretaries of state and defense, William Rogers and Melvin Laird, both of whom were highly skeptical about widening the war. On one especially charming occasion, Nixon telephoned Kissinger, while drunk, to discuss the invasion plans. He then put Bebe Rebozo on the line. "The President wants you to know if this doesn't work, Henry, it's your ass." "Ain't that right, Bebe?" slurred the commander in chief. (The conversation was monitored and transcribed by one of Kissinger's soon-to-resign staffers, William Watts.) It could be said that in this instance the national security adviser was under considerable pressure; nevertheless, he took the side of the pro-invasion faction and, according to the memoirs of General William Westmoreland, actually lobbied for that invasion to go ahead.



NEGLECTED AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED CHILD OF AN AGENT ORANGE VICTIM, 1998

A somewhat harder picture is presented by former chief of staff H. R. Haldeman in his *Diaries*. On December 22, 1970, he records:

> [illegible] meeting with K coming up with it agreed to meet with the P to [illegible] on [illegible] Haig and then tomorrow with Laird and [illegible] before we see the P to force Laird and [illegible] to go ahead with the P's plans [illegible] but without direct orders.

In *The White House Years* Kissinger claims that he usurped the customary chain of command whereby commanders in the field receive, or believe that they receive, their orders from the president and then the secretary of defense. He boasts that he, together with Haldeman, Alexander Haig, and Colonel Ray Sitton, evolved "both a military and a diplomatic schedule" for the secret bombing of Cambodia. On board Air Force One, which was on the tarmac at Brussels airport on February 24, 1969, he writes, "we worked out the guidelines for bombing of the enemy's sanctuaries." A few weeks later, Haldeman's *Diaries* for March 17 record:

> Historic day. K[issinger]'s "Operation Breakfast" finally came off at 2:00 PM our time.
>
> K[issinger] really excited, as was P[resident].

The next day's entry:

> K[issinger]'s "Operation Breakfast" a great success. He came [illegible] in with report, very productive.

It only got better. On April 22, 1970, Haldeman reports that Nixon, following Kissinger into a National Security Council meeting on Cambodia, "turned back to me with a big smile and said, 'K[issinger]'s really having fun today, he's playing Bismarck.'"

The above is an insult to the Iron Chancellor. When Kissinger was finally exposed in Congress and the press for conducting unauthorized bombings, he weakly pleaded that the raids were not all that secret, really, because Prince Sihanouk of Cambodia had known of them. He had to be reminded that a foreign princeling cannot give permission to an American bureaucrat to violate the United States Constitution. Nor, for that matter, can he give permission to an American bureaucrat to slaughter large numbers of his "own" civilians. It's difficult to imagine Bismarck cowering behind such a contemptible excuse. (Prince Sihanouk, it is worth remembering, later became an abject puppet of the Khmer Rouge.)

Colonel Sitton, the reigning expert on B-52 tactics at the Joint Chiefs of Staff, began to notice that by late 1969 his own office was being regularly overruled in the matter of selecting targets. "Not only was Henry carefully screening the raids," said Sitton, "he was reading the raw intelligence" and fiddling with the mission patterns and bombing runs. In other departments of Washington insiderdom, it was also noticed that Kissinger was becoming a Stakhanovite committeeman. Aside from the crucial 40 Committee, which planned and oversaw all foreign covert actions, he chaired the Washington Special Action Group (WSAG), which dealt with breaking crises; the Verification Panel, concerned with arms control; the Vietnam Special Studies Group, which oversaw the day-to-day conduct of the war; and the Defense Program Review Committee, which supervised the budget of the Defense Department.

It is therefore impossible for him to claim that he was unaware of the consequences of the bomb-

ings of Cambodia and Laos, but more, morally, them, and in more intimate detail, than most other individual. Nor was he impressed by a culture of obedience that gave him no alternative, or no rival arguments. Several senior members of his own staff, most notably Anthony Lake and Roger Morris, resigned over the invasion of Cambodia, and more than two hundred State Department employees signed a protest addressed to Secretary of State William Rogers. Indeed, both Rogers and Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird were opposed to the secret bombing policy, as Kissinger himself records with some disgust in his memoirs. Congress also was opposed to an extension of the bombing (once it had agreed to become informed of it), but even after the Nixon-Kissinger Administration had undertaken on Capitol Hill not to intensify the raids, there was a 21 percent increase of the bombing of Cambodia in the months of July and August 1973. The Air Force maps of the targeted areas show them to be, or to have been, densely populated.

Colonel Sitton does recall, it must be admitted, that Kissinger requested the bombing avoid civilian casualties. His explicit motive in making this request was to avoid or forestall complaints from the government of Prince Sihanouk. But this does no more in itself than demonstrate that Kissinger was aware of the possibility of civilian deaths. If he knew enough to know of their likelihood, and was director of the policy that inflicted them, and neither enforced any actual precautions nor reprimanded any violators, then the case against him is legally and morally complete.

As early as the fall of 1970, an independent investigator named Fred Brantman, who spoke Lao and knew the country as a civilian volunteer, had gone to Bangkok and interviewed Jerome Brown, a former targeting officer for the United States Embassy in the Laotian capital of Vientiane. The man had retired from the Air Force because of his disillusionment at the futility of the bombing and his consternation at the damage done to civilians and livestock. The speed and height of the planes, he said, meant that targets were virtually indistinguishable from the air. Pilots often chose villages as targets, because they could be more readily identified than alleged Pathet Lao guerrillas hiding in the jungle. Brantman, whom I interviewed in San Francisco in the summer of 2000, went on to provide this and other information to Hedrick Kamm and Sydney Schanberg of the *New York Times*, to Ted Koppel of ABC, and to many others. Under pressure from the United States Embassy, the Laotian authorities had Brantman deported back to the United States, and they probably, from their point of view, a mistake

was able to make a dramatic appearance on Capitol Hill [illegible] ambassador to Laos, Brantman accused him in front [illegible] that [illegible] of the bombing.

Partly as a consequence, Congressman Pete McCloskey [illegible]

"THE PRESIDENT WANTS YOU TO KNOW IF THIS DOESN'T WORK, HENRY, IT'S YOUR ASS." —BEBE REBOZO

acquired a copy of an internal U.S. Embassy study of the bombing. He also got hold of certain U.S. Air Force reconnaissance photographs of the dramatic damage. Ambassador Sullivan was so disturbed by the [illegible] of them taken in areas known to him, that his first reaction was to establish to his own satisfaction that the raids had occurred after he left his post in Vientiane. He was later to learn that, for his pains, his own telephone was being tapped at Henry Kissinger's instigation, one of the many such violations of American law that were to culminate in the Watergate bugging and burglary scandal, a scandal that Kissinger was furthermore to plead—in an astounding outburst of vanity, deceit, and self-deceit—as his own alibi for collusion in the 1974 coup in Cyprus.

Having done what he could to bring the Laotian nightmare to the attention of those whose constitutional job it was to supervise such questions, Brantman went back to Thailand and from there to Phnom Penh, capital of Cambodia. Having gained access to a pilot's radio, he tape-recorded the conversations between pilots on bombing missions over the Cambodian interior. On no occasion did they run any checks designed to reassure themselves and others that they were not [illegible] civilian targets. It had been claimed [illegible] by some U.S. government officials that [illegible] Brantman handed the tapes to Sydney Schanberg [illegible] press [illegible] Senate [illegible] Embassy [illegible]

[illegible] Thailand and traveled north to Nakhorn Phanom, the new headquarters of the U.S. Seventh Air [illegible]

posed a new recruit just up from Saigon and ultimately gained access to the war room itself. Consoles and maps and screens plotted the progress of the bombardment. In conversation with the "bombing officer" on duty, he asked if pilots ever made contact before dropping their enormous loads of ordnance. Oh, yes, he was assured, they did. Were they worried about hitting the innocent? Oh, no—merely concerned about the whereabouts of CIA "ground teams" infiltrated into the area. Branfman's report on this, which was carried by Jack Anderson's syndicated column, was uncontroverted by any official denial.

One reason that the American command in Southeast Asia finally ceased employing the crude and horrific tally of "body count" was that, as in the relatively small but specific case of Operation "Speedy Express" cited above, the figures began to look ominous when they were counted up. Sometimes, totals of "enemy" dead would turn out, when computed, to be suspiciously larger than the number of claimed "enemy" in the field. Yet the war would somehow drag on, with new quantitative goals being set and enforced. Thus, according to the Pentagon, the following are the casualty figures between the first Lyndon Johnson bombing halt in March 1968 and February 26, 1972:

Americans: 31,205
South Vietnamese regulars: 86,101
"Enemy": 475,609

The U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Refugees estimated that in the same four-year period, rather more than 3 million civilians were killed, injured, or rendered homeless.

In the same four-year period, the United States dropped almost 4,500,000 tons of high explosive on Indochina. (The Pentagon's estimated total for the amount dropped in the entire Second World War is 2,044,000.) This total does not include massive sprayings of chemical defoliants and pesticides.

It is unclear how we count the murder or abduction of 35,708 Vietnamese civilians by the CIA's counterguerrilla "Phoenix program" during the first two and a half years of the Nixon-Kissinger Administration. There may be some overlap. There is also some overlap with the actions of previous administrations in all cases. But the truly exorbitant death tolls all occurred on Henry Kissinger's watch, were known and understood by him; were concealed from Congress, the press, and the public by him; and were, when questioned, the subject of political and bureaucratic vendettas ordered by him. They were also partly the outcome of a secretive and illegal process in Washington, unknown even to most Cabinet members, of which Henry Kissinger stood to be, and became, a prime beneficiary.

On that closing point one may once again cite H. R. Haldeman, who had no further reason to lie and who had, by the time of his writing, paid for his crimes by serving a sentence in prison. Haldeman describes the moment in Florida when Kissinger was enraged by a *New York Times* story telling some part of the truth about Indochina:

> Henry telephoned J. Edgar Hoover in Washington from Key Biscayne on the May morning the *Times* story appeared.
>
> According to Hoover's memo of the call, Henry said the story used "secret information which was extraordinarily damaging." Henry went on to tell Hoover that he "wondered whether I could make a major effort to find out where that came from . . . and to put whatever resources I need to find out who did this. I told him I would take care of this right away."
>
> Henry was no fool, of course. He telephoned Hoover a few hours later to remind him that the investigation be handled discreetly "so no stories will get out." Hoover must have smiled, but said all right. And by five o'clock he was back on the telephone to Henry with the report that the *Times* reporter "may have gotten some of his information from the Southeast Asia desk of the Department of Defense's Public Affairs Office." More specifically, Hoover suggested the source could be a man named Morton Halperin (a Kissinger staffer) and another man who worked in the Systems Analysis Agency. . . . According to Hoover's memo, Kissinger "hoped I would follow it up as far as we can take it and they will destroy whoever did this if we can find him, no matter where he is."
>
> The last line of that memo gives an accurate reflection of Henry's rage, as I remember it.
>
> Nevertheless, Nixon was one hundred percent behind the wiretaps. And I was, too.
>
> And thus the program started, inspired by Henry's rage but ordered by Nixon, who soon broadened it even further to include newsmen. Eventually, seventeen people were wiretapped by the FBI, including seven on Kissinger's NSC staff and three on the White House staff.

And thus, the birth of the "plumbers" and of the assault on American law and democracy that they inaugurated. Commenting on the lamentable end of this process, Haldeman wrote that he still believed that ex-president Nixon (who was then still alive) should agree to the release of the remaining tapes. But:

> This time my view is apparently not shared by the man who was one reason for the original decision

KISSINGER OFFHANDEDLY DESCRIBED CHILE AS "A DAGGER POINTED AT THE HEART OF ANTARCTICA"

to start the tape process. [illegible] determined to stop the tapes from reaching the public.

Nixon made the point that Kissinger was one of the one who had the most to lose from the coming publication. Henry apparently felt that the tapes would expose a lot of things he had said that would be very disadvantageous to him publicly.

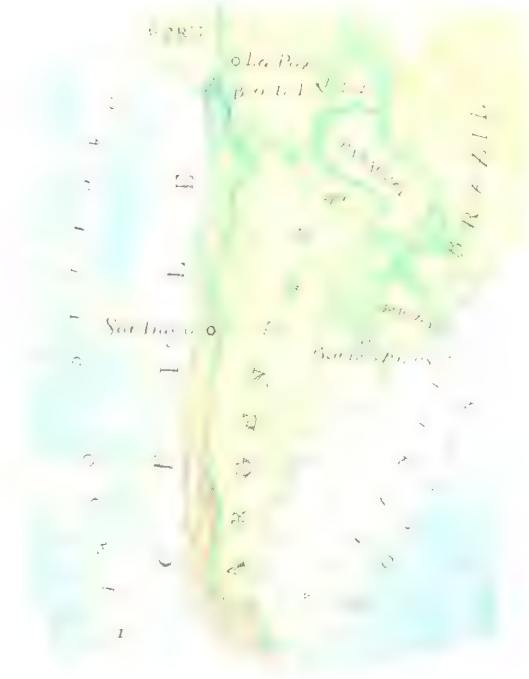
Nixon said that in making the deal for custody of his Presidential papers, which he was to announce after his pardon but then was shot down by Congress, that it was Henry who called him and insisted on Nixon's right to destroy the tapes. That was, of course, the thing that destroyed the deal.

A society that has been "plumbed" has the right to demand that its plumbers be compelled to make some restitution by way of full disclosure. The litigation to put the Nixon tapes in the public trust is only partially complete; no truthful account of the Vietnam years will be available until Kissinger's part in what we already know has been made fully transparent.

Until that time, Kissinger's role in the violation of American law at the close of the Vietnam War makes the perfect counterpart to the 1963 covert action that helped him to power in the first place. The two parentheses enclose a series of premeditated war crimes that still have power to stun the imagination.

CHILE (PART I): STATESMAN AS HITMAN

In a famous expression of his contempt for democracy, Kissinger once observed that he saw no reason why a certain country should be allowed to "go Communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people." The country concerned was Chile, which at the time of this remark had a justified reputation as the most highly evolved pluralistic democracy in the Southern Hemisphere of the Americas. The pluralism translated, in the years of the Cold War, into an electorate that voted about one-third conservative, one-third socialist and Communist, and one-third Christian Democratic and centrist. This had made it relatively easy to keep the Marxist element from having its turn in government, and ever since 1962 the C.I.A. had [illegible] it had in Italy and other comparable countries largely contented itself with funding the reliable elements. In September 1970, however, the left's candidate actually gained a slight plurality of 36.2 percent in the presidential election. Divisions on the right, and the willingness of some smaller radical and Christian parties to the left, made it a moral certainty that the Chilean Congress would, after the traditional [illegible] interregnum, confirm Dr. Salvador Allende as the next president. But the very name of Allende



David Rockefeller of Chase Manhattan, and with C.I.A. director Richard Helms, Kissinger went with Helms to the Oval Office. Helms's note of the meeting show that Nixon was a little brutal in making his wishes known. Allende was not to assume office. "[illegible] set concerned [illegible] Nix involvement of embassy. $10,000,000 available, more if necessary. Full time job—best men we have. . . . Make the economy scream. 48 hours for plan of action."

Declassified documents show that Kissinger [illegible] Nixon's unprecedented encouragement [illegible] Allende's election as "a clear [illegible] C.I.A. [illegible] to [illegible] Nixon was [illegible] Chilean [illegible] "policy [illegible]

destabilization, kidnapping, and assassination designed to provoke a military coup.

There were long- and short-term obstacles to the incubation of such an intervention, especially in the brief interval available before Allende took his oath of office. The long-term obstacle was the tradition of military abstention from politics in Chile, a tradition that marked off the country from its neighbors. Such a military culture was not to be degraded overnight. The short-term obstacle lay in the person of one man: General René Schneider. As chief of the Chilean Army, he was adamantly opposed to any military meddling in the electoral process. Accordingly, it was decided at a meeting on September 18, 1970, that General Schneider had to go.

The plan, well documented by Seymour Hersh and others, was to have him kidnapped by extremist officers, in such a way as to make it appear that leftist and pro-Allende elements were behind the plot. The resulting confusion, it was hoped, would panic the Chilean Congress into denying Allende the presidency. A sum of $50,000 was offered around the Chilean capital, Santiago, for any officer or officers enterprising enough to take on



SALVADOR ALLENDE,

this task. Richard Helms and his director of covert [illegible], Thomas Karamessines, told Kissinger that they were not optimistic. Military circles were hesitant and divided, or else loyal to General Schneider and the Chilean constitution. As Helms put it in a later account of the conversation: "We tried to make clear to Kissinger how small the possibility of success was." Kissinger firmly told Helms and Karamessines to press on in any case.

Here one must pause for a recapitulation. An unelected official in the United States is meeting with others, without the knowledge or authorization of Congress, to plan the kidnapping of a constitutionally minded senior officer in a democratic country with which the United States is not at war and with which it maintains cordial diplomatic relations. The minutes of the meetings may have an official look to them (though they were hidden from the light of day for long enough), but what we are reviewing is a "hit," a piece of state-supported terrorism.

Ambassador Edward Korry has testified that he told his embassy staff to have nothing to do with a group styling itself Patria y Libertad, a quasi-fascist group intent on defying the election results. He sent two cables to Washington warning his superiors to have nothing to do with them either. He was unaware that his own military attachés had been told to contact the group and to keep the fact from him. And when the outgoing president of Chile, the Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei, announced that he was opposed to any American intervention and would vote to confirm the legally elected Allende, it was precisely to this gang that Kissinger turned. On September 15, 1970, Kissinger was told of an extremist right-wing officer named General Roberto Viaux, who had ties to Patria y Libertad and who was willing to accept the secret American commission to remove General Schneider from the chessboard. The term "kidnap" was still being employed at this point and is often employed still. Kissinger's "track two" group, however, authorized the supply of machine guns as well as tear-gas grenades to Viaux's associates and never seem to have asked what they would do with the general once they had kidnapped him.

Let the documents tell the story. A CIA cable to Kissinger's "track two" group from Santiago dated October 18, 1970, reads (with the names still blacked out for "security" purposes and cover identities written in by hand, in my square brackets, by the ever-thoughtful redaction service) as follows:

> 1. [Station cooptee] MET CLANDESTINELY EVENING 17 OCT WITH [two Chilean Armed Forces officers] WHO TOLD HIM THEIR PLANS WERE MOVING ALONG [illegible] THAT BY EVENING 18 OCT [cooptee] ARRANGE FURNISH [illegible] WITHIN 48 HOURS THEY NEED THREE 45 CALIBRE MACHINE GUNS ("GREASE GUNS") WITH 500 ROUNDS AMMO EACH. [One officer] COMMENTED HAS THREE MACHINE GUNS HIMSELF BUT CAN BE IDENTIFIED BY SERIAL NUMBERS AS HAVING BEEN ISSUED TO HIM THEREFORE CANNOT USE THEM

2. [Officers] SAID THEY [illegible] THEY BELIEVE THEY NOW [illegible] WATCHED BY ALLENDE SUPPORTERS. [One officer] WAS LATE TO MEETING [illegible] TWO LATE CALLS WITH DEAD AIR. BELIEVED BEING USED BY OPPOSITION AGAINST HIM.

3. [Cooptee] ASKED IF [officers] HAD AIR FORCE CONTACTS. THEY ANSWERED THEY DID NOT BUT WOULD WELCOME ONE. [Cooptee] SEPARATELY HAS SINCE TRIED TO CONTACT [a Chilean Air Force General] AND WILL KEEP TRYING UNTIL ESTABLISHED. WILL URGE [Air Force General] MEET WITH [other two officers] ASAP. [Cooptee] COMMENTED TO STATION THAT [Air Force General] HAS NOT TRIED CONTACT HIM SINCE RELATIVE

4. [Cooptee] COMMENTED CASSANDRA CLEARLY IS LEADER OF THIS MOVEMENT BUT STRONGLY SUSPECTS IT IS ADMIRAL [Deleted]. IT WOULD APPEAR FROM [his contacts'] ACTIONS AND ALLEGED LEAKS SUSPICIONS ABOUT THEM THAT UNLESS THEY ACT NOW THEY ARE LOST. TRYING TO GET MORE INFORMATION ON EXACTLY WHAT THEY HAVE.

5. STATION PLANS GIVE SIX TEAR GAS GRENADES (ARRIVED [illegible]) TO [illegible] FOR DELIVERY TO [cooptee] FOR DELIVERY TO [Armed Forces officer]. INSTEAD OF HAVING [False Flag officer] DELIVER THEM TO TAUN GROUP, OUR PLANS APPEAR THAT [cooptee] DEALING WITH ACTIVE DUTY OFFICERS. ALSO [False Flag officer] HAVE GIVEN [illegible] AND BE REPLACED BY [cooptee]. WE STRONGLY FEEL IT IMPORTANT THAT [cooptee] CREDIBILITY WITH [Armed Forces officers] ESTABLISHED [illegible] DELIVERY WHAT THEY REQUEST. HEADQUARTERS WORKING BY 15 OCTOBER [illegible] OCT ON DECISION DELIVERY OF TEAR GAS TO [cooptee] VICE [False Flag officer].

6. REQUEST PROMPT SHIPMENT THREE STERILE 45 CALIBRE MACHINE GUNS AND AMMO PER PARA 1 ABOVE, BY SPECIAL COURIER IF NECESSARY. PLEASE CONFIRM BY 2000 HOURS LOCAL TIME [illegible] THIS CAN BE DONE SO [cooptee] MAY INFORM [his contacts] ACCORDINGLY.

The reply, which is headed IMMEDIATE SANTIAGO (EYES ONLY [deleted]), is dated October 15 and reads as follows:

SUB-MACHINE GUNS AND AMMO BEING SENT BY REGULAR [deleted] COURIER LEAVING WASHINGTON 0700 HOURS 19 OCTOBER [illegible] EVENING 20 OCTOBER OR EARLY MORNING 21 OCTOBER. [illegible] AVOID BRINGING UNDUE ATTENTION TO OP.

A companion message, also addressed to "SANTIAGO 562," went like this:

1. PLEASE ADVISE HOW [cooptee] CONTACTED [illegible] REPORT [deleted] SO WE CAN DECIDE WHAT [illegible] SHOULD BE DISSEMED.

2. NEW SUBJECT: IF [cooptee] PLANS TO BE ACTIVELY AND PUBLICLY INVOLVED, WE [illegible] WHY IT SHOULD BOTHER HIM IF MACHINE GUNS [illegible]

[illegible]

The full beauty of this cable traffic cannot be appreciated without recalling one earlier message, dated October 1st. (It must be borne in mind that the Chilean Congress was to meet to confirm Allende as president on the twenty-fourth of that month.)

[illegible] [Deleted] [illegible] [Deleted] Government] LEVEL AFTERNOON 15 OCTOBER. CON-

WHAT WE ARE REVIEWING IS A "HIT," A PIECE OF STATE-SUPPORTED TERRORISM

CLUSIONS, WHICH [illegible] ARE TO BE YOUR OPERATIONAL [illegible]

[illegible] WHILE THIS IMPOSES ON US A HIGH DEGREE OF SELECTIVITY IN MAKING MILITARY CONTACTS AND DIG[illegible] CONTACTS SUCH AS REPORTED IN SANTIAGO 544 WHICH WAS A MASTERFUL PIECE OF WORK. [Italics added.]

[illegible] WAS DETERMINED THAT A TAUN COUP ATTEMPT [illegible] [Track two] [illegible] TIVES. IT WAS DECIDED THAT [CIA] GET A MESSAGE [illegible] TION. IN ESSENCE OUR MESSAGE IS TO STATE, "WE HAVE REVIEWED YOUR PLANS, AND BASED ON YOUR IN[illegible] CANNOT SUCCEED. EMING, THEY MAY REDUCE YOUR [illegible] [illegible] "YOU ARE REQUESTED TO DELIVER THE MES[illegible] CONTACTS SENTIMENTS AS NOTED ABOVE. OUR [illegible]

HIS PLANNING; (C) ENCOURAGE HIM TO JOIN FORCES WITH OTHER COUP PLOTTERS SO THAT THEY MAY ACT BY OCTOBER, EITHER BEFORE OR AFTER 24 OCTOBER. (N.B. SIX GAS MASKS AND SIX C/S CANNISTERS [sic] ARE BEING ASSEMBLED TO BE FLOWN BY SPECIAL [deleted] COURIER ETD WASHINGTON 1100 HOURS 16 OCTOBER.)

4. THERE IS GREAT AND CONTINUING INTEREST IN THE ACTIVITIES OF TIRADO, CANALES, VALENZUELA ET AL. [deleted] ARE THEY MAXIMIZING OUR SUPPORT?

5. THE ABOVE IS YOUR OPERATING GUIDANCE. NO OTHER INFORMATION OR GUIDANCE SHOULD BE GIVEN FROM [*inexplicable*—State] OR ITS MAXIMUM EXPOSURE IN SANTIAGO, ON HIS RETURN, ARE TO SWAY YOU FROM YOUR COURSE.

6. PLEASE REVIEW ALL YOUR PRESENT AND POSSIBLY NEW ACTIVITIES TO INCLUDE PROPAGANDA, BLACK [deleted], OTHER [deleted] INFORMATION, PERSONAL CONTACTS, OR ANYTHING

YOU MAY NOT SAY, WITH A CORPSE AT YOUR FEET, "I WAS ONLY TRYING TO KIDNAP HIM"

ELSE YOUR IMAGINATION CAN CONJURE WHICH WILL PERMIT YOU TO PRESS FORWARD OUR [deleted] OBJECTIVE IN A SECURE MANNER.

Finally, it is essential to read the White House "MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION," dated October 15, 1970, to which the above cable directly refers and of which it is a more honest summary. Present for the "HIGH USG LEVEL" meeting were, as noted in the heading, "Dr. Kissinger, Mr. Karamessines, Gen. Haig." The first paragraph of their deliberations has been entirely blacked out, with not so much as a scribble in the margin from the redaction service. (Given what has since been admitted, this sixteen-line deletion must be well worth reading.) Picking up at paragraph two, we find:

> 2. Then Mr. Karamessines provided a run-down on Viaux, the Canales meeting with Tirado, the latter's new position (after Porta was relieved of command "for health reasons") and, in some detail, the general situation in Chile from the coup possibility viewpoint.
>
> 3. A certain amount of information was available to us concerning Viaux's alleged support throughout the Chilean military. We had assessed Viaux's claims carefully, basing our analysis on good intelligence from a number of sources. Our conclusion was clear: Viaux did not have more than one chance in twenty—perhaps less—to launch a successful coup.
>
> 4. The most immediate repercussions in Chile and in [illegible] of an unsuccessful coup were discussed. Dr. Kissinger ticked off his list of these negative considerations. His items were remarkably similar to [illegible] Mr. Karamessines had prepared [illegible] Dr. Kissinger pressed that the Agency must get a message to Viaux warning him against any precipitate action. In essence our message was to state: "We have reviewed your plans, and based on your information and ours, we come to the conclusion that your plans for a coup at this time cannot succeed. Failing, they may reduce your capabilities for the future. Preserve your assets. We will stay in touch. The time will come when you with all your other friends can do something. You will continue to have our support."
>
> 6. After the decision to de-fuse the Viaux coup plot, *at least temporarily*, Dr. Kissinger instructed Mr. Karamessines to preserve Agency assets in Chile, working clandestinely and securely to maintain the capability for Agency operations against Allende in the future. [*Italics added.*]
>
> 7. Dr. Kissinger discussed his desire that the word of our encouragement to the Chilean military in recent weeks be kept as secret as possible. Mr. Karamessines stated emphatically that we had been doing everything possible in this connection, including the use of false flag officers, car meetings and every conceivable precaution. But we and others had done a great deal of talking recently with a number of persons. For example, Ambassador Korry's wide-ranging discussions with numerous people urging a coup "cannot be put back into the bottle." [*Three lines of deletion follow.*] (Dr. Kissinger requested that copy of the message be sent to him on 16 October.)
>
> 8. The meeting concluded on Dr. Kissinger's note that the Agency should continue keeping the pressure on every Allende weak spot in sight—now, after the 24th of October, after 5 November, and into the future until such time as new marching orders are given. Mr. Karamessines stated that the Agency would comply.

So "track two" contained two tracks of its own. "Track two/one" was the group of ultras led by General Roberto Viaux and his sidekick, Captain Arturo Marshal. These men had tried to bring off a coup in 1969 against the Christian Democrats; they had been cashiered and were disliked even by conservatives in the officer corps. "Track two/two" was a more ostensibly "respectable" faction headed by General Camilo Valenzuela, the chief of the garrison in the capital city, whose name occurs in the cables above and whose identity is concealed by some of the deletions. Several of the CIA operatives in Chile felt that Viaux was too much of a madman to be trusted. And Ambassador Korry's repeated admonitions also had their effect. As shown in the October 15 memo cited above, Kissinger and Karamessines developed last-minute second thoughts about Viaux, who as late as October 13 had been given $20,000 in cash from the CIA station and promised a life-insurance policy of $250,000. This offer was authorized directly from the White House. With only days to go, however, before Allende was inaugurated, and with Nixon repeating that "it was absolutely essential that the

election of Mr. Allende to the presidency was thwarted," the pressure on the Valenzuela group became intense. As a direct consequence, especially after the warm words of encouragement it had received, General Roberto Viaux felt himself under some obligation to deliver and to disprove those who had doubted him.

On the evening of October 19, 1970, the Valenzuela group, armed by some CIA "friends" and equipped with the tear-gas grenades delivered by the CIA, attempted to grab General Schneider as he left an official dinner. The attempt failed because Schneider left in a private car and not the expected official one. The failure produced an extremely significant cable from CIA headquarters in Washington to the local station, asking for urgent action because "[illegible] MUST BE STOPPED [illegible] @ HELPS HIS MILITARY [illegible]." Payments of $50,000 each to Valenzuela and his chief associate were then authorized on condition that they make another attempt. On the evening of October 20 they did. But again there was only failure to report. On October 22 the "sterile" machine guns mentioned above were handed to Valenzuela's group for yet another try. Later that same day, General Roberto Viaux's gang finally murdered General René Schneider.

According to the later verdict of the Chilean military courts, this atrocity partook of elements of both tracks of "track two." In other words, Valenzuela was not himself on the scene, but the assassination squad, led by Viaux, contained men who had participated in the preceding two attempts. Viaux was convicted on charges of kidnapping and of conspiring to cause a coup. Valenzuela was convicted of the charge of conspiracy to cause a coup. So any subsequent attempt to distinguish the two plots from each other, except in point of degree, is an attempt to confect a distinction without a difference.

It scarcely matters whether Schneider was slain because of a kidnapping scheme that went awry (he was said by the assassins to have had the temerity to resist) or whether the kidnapping was the objective in the first place. The Chilean military police report, as it happens, describes a straightforward murder. Under the law of every law-bound country (including the United States), a crime committed in the pursuit of a kidnapping is thereby aggravated, not mitigated. You may not say, with a corpse at your feet, "I was only trying to kidnap him." At least, you may not say so if you hope to plead extenuating [illegible].

Yet a version of "extenuating circumstances" has become the paper thin [illegible]. Kissinger has since protected [illegible] charge of being an accomplice, before the fact, in kidnapping and murder. And this [illegible] CIA. One [illegible] officially discouraged by the CIA a few days before [illegible] a plan to kill Schneider or that United States officials specifically anticipated that Schneider [illegible].

[illegible] takes at face value a memo from Kissinger to Nixon after his meeting on October 15 with Karamessines, in which he reports to the president about the Viaux plot, saying that he had "turned it off." He also takes at face value the claim that Viaux [illegible] and were essentially immobilized. These excuses and apologies are as logically feeble as they are morally contemptible. Henry Kissinger bears direct responsibility for the Schneider murder, as the following points demonstrate:

1) Bruce MacMaster, one of the "False Flag" agents mentioned in the cable traffic above, a career CIA man carrying a forged Colombian passport and claiming to represent American business interests in Chile, has told of his efforts to get "hush money" to jailed members of the Viaux group, *after* the assassination and before they could implicate the embassy.

2) Colonel Paul M. Wimert, a military attaché in Santiago and chief CIA liaison with the Valenzuela faction, has testified that after the Schneider killing he hastily retrieved the two payments of $50,000 that had been paid to Valenzuela and his partner, and also the three "sterile" machine guns. He then drove rapidly to the Chilean seaside town of Viña del Mar and hurled the guns into the ocean. His accomplice in this action, CIA station chief Henry Hecksher, had assured Washington only days before that *either* Viaux *or* Valenzuela would be able to eliminate Schneider and [illegible].

[illegible] at the White House [illegible] memo of October 15 and at the doggedly literal [illegible] Kissinger [illegible] cites him—a well-known and boastful fanatic—to redouble his efforts. "Preserve your assets. We [illegible] with all your other friends can do something. [illegible]." Hardly not exactly the language of standing him down. [illegible] CIA [illegible] "[illegible]," and to "ENCOURAGE HIM

[illegible] (*Italics added.*) The last three stipulations are an entirely accurate, not to say prescient, description of what Viaux actually did.

4) Consult again the cable received by Henry Hecksher on October 20, referring to anxious queries "from high levels" about the first of the failed attacks on Schneider. Thomas Karamessines, when questioned by the Senate intelligence committee about the same phrase in a similar cable sent to another CIA agent in Santiago, testified of his certainty that the term "high levels" referred directly to Kissinger. In all previous communications from Washington, as a glance above will show, that had indeed been the case. This on its own is enough to demolish Kissinger's claim to have "turned off" "track two" (and its interior tracks) on October 15.

5) Ambassador Edward Korry later made the obvious point that Kissinger was attempting to build a paper alibi in the event of a failure by the Viaux group: "His interest was not in Chile but in who was going to be blamed for what. He wanted me to be the one who took the heat. Henry didn't want to be associated with a failure, and he was setting up a record to blame the State Department. He brought me in to the President because he wanted me to say what I had to say about Viaux; he wanted me to be the soft man."

The concept of "deniability" was not as well understood in Washington in 1970 as it has since become. But it is clear that Henry Kissinger wanted two things simultaneously: He wanted the removal of General Schneider, by any means and employing any proxy. (No instruction from Washington to leave Schneider unharmed was ever given; deadly weapons were sent by diplomatic pouch, and men of violence were carefully selected to receive them.) And he wanted to be out of the picture in case such an attempt might fail, or be uncovered. These are the normal motives of anyone who solicits or suborns murder. Kissinger, however, needed the crime very slightly more than he needed, or was able to design, the deniability. Without waiting for his many hidden papers to be released or subpoenaed, we can say with safety that he is prima facie guilty of direct collusion in the murder of a constitutional officer in a democratic and peaceful country.

A NOTE ON PART TWO

Two well-marked and separate but consistent styles may be noticed in Kissinger's successive, sanguinary encounters with Indochina and Chile: in the first instance, a megalo-style, replete with overblown operatic effects on his part and grand, terrifying consequences for others; in the second instance, a micro-style, involving an obsessive, almost fussy manipulation of smaller forces. The two practices are actually quite congruent, and there is an obvious relation between the gross and comprehensive violence of the first case and the intimate and personal cruelty of the second.

In Indochina, the megalo-scale of mass murder also required much individual fawning, the tireless flattering of numerous secret committees, and the smiling betrayal of several associates. In Chile, the micro-scale of surreptitious assassination was paradoxically conceived with a certain grandeur, the objective being the destabilization of an entire government and, ultimately, the teaching of a sharp pedagogical lesson to a whole subcontinent.

In the March issue of *Harper's Magazine*, we shall again encounter these two contrasting but symmetrical tropes. In Chile, the destruction of an economy, a president, and a constitution is followed by the knowing extension of the "death squad" system across the Southern Americas. Vendetta, in other words—against Schneider and Allende—evolves into realpolitik. In Bangladesh, it is calmly decided that the lives of millions of Bengalis are expendable: they are the price of a glorifying photo-op in Beijing, the returning of a favor to a military dictator, and payment for an old personal resentment by Kissinger's boss. Since the victim cannot be forgiven, this grudge is later pursued to the threshold of assassination and beyond. In Cyprus, a fancied slight or two from an elected but inconvenient leader is enough to set the machinery of designated murder and wider geopolitical "destabilization" clanking again: out of a perceived affront to power evolves a bitter war and a continuing tragedy. In East Timor, an uncountable hill of corpses rises so that a covert and illegal handshake between Henry Kissinger and a bizarre despot may be honored. While in Washington, D.C., a lone reporter catches and offends the world's coldest eye and nearly loses both liberty and life as a consequence.

Finally—and as the most squalid illustration of the obscene connection between the vastly lethal and the merely paltry—we discover Henry Kissinger profiting explicitly as a private man from the crimes he committed as a public one. The stale image of the "revolving door" is inadequate to depict the great mill and grindstone of influence, as it generates misery and homicide in one corner and personal gain in another. Now that both corners can be illuminated, it has become both possible and necessary to sum up the legal case against this person, a case that unsurprisingly consists of gross violations of broad international laws and deliberate, cumulative, identifiable breaches of local and national ones.

This is, in both declensions—and in both senses—an American responsibility. ■

ONE ACRE

On devaluing real estate to keep land priceless

By Joy Williams

I had an acre in Florida, on a lagoon close by the Gulf of Mexico.

I am admittedly putting this first line up against Karl Dinesen's famous oneiric one: *I had a farm in Africa, at the foot of the Ngong Hills.* When Dinesen first came to Africa she confessed that she could not "live without getting a fine specimen of each single kind of African game." For her the hunt was an eroticized image of desire, "a love affair," wherein the "shot . . . was in reality a declaration of love." She must have blushed to record this shovel later, for after ten years she found hunting "an unreasonable thing, indeed in itself ugly and vulgar, for the sake of a few hours' enjoyment to put out a life that belonged in the great landscape and had grown up on it." One could say her thinking had evolved, that she had become more conscientious. Still, when she was about to leave her beloved farm (her house, emptied of furniture, was admirably "clean like a skull"), she planned to shoot her dogs and horses, dissuaded from doing so only by the pleas of her friends. The animals belonged to her, as had the land, which she ceased to own only when it became owned by another, and subject to that person's whims and policies. Of course it became hers again through writing about it, preserving it in *Out of Africa.* Once again, Art, reflective poesy, saves landscape.

I had an acre in Florida . . . This bodes no drama. For what wonders could a single acre hold, what meaning or relevance? Although the word "Florida" is oneiric, too, and thus its own metaphor. It is an occasional place, a palmed and pleasant stage for transients. To hold fast to an acre in that vast state is almost neurotic. An acre is both too much and not enough. It's [illegible] permitted by law [illegible].

I once saw a white heron in a tumbled landscape on the sprawling outskirts of Naples, [illegible] Preserve and Everglades National Park. The heron seemed to be beating its head against a tree knocked down by bulldozers to widen a road. Water still lay along the palmetto-dotted earth, but pipes would soon carry it

[illegible] most recent piece for Harper's Magazine was "On Inhabitants of the Animal People," appeared in the August [illegible] issue.

WHEN LAND IS DIVIDED, LAND DEVELOPED, IT CEASES BEING LAND. IT BECOMES COVERED, CONSUMED, SEALED. IT BECOMES ITS OWN GRAVE

away and dry the land for town houses and golf courses. Cars sped past. The heron, white as a robed angel must surely be, *was* beating his head against the tree. He was lost to himself, deranged, in his ruined and lost landscape.

I have seen all manner of beautiful waterbirds struck down by cars. I used to take them home and bury them between the mangroves and the live oaks on my lagoon. But of course it was not *my* lagoon, this body of water only a mile and a half long. To the north it cedes to a private road that gives access to the Sanderling Club, where the exceptionally wealthy enjoy their Gulf views. To the south it vanishes beneath the parking lot for a public beach. This is on Siesta Key, a crowded eight-mile-long island off Sarasota that is joined to the mainland by two bridges, one four lanes, the other two. The lagoon is named Heron; the beach, Turtle. Yes, the turtles still come to nest, and the volunteers who stake and guard the nests are grateful—they practically weep with gratitude—when the condo dwellers keep their lights out during the hatching weeks so as not to confuse the infant turtles in their night search for the softly luminous sea. But usually the condo dwellers don't keep their lights out. They might accommodate the request were they there, but they are seldom there. The lights are controlled by timers and burn bright and long. The condos are investments, mostly, not homes. Like the lands they've consumed, they're cold commodities. When land is developed, it ceases being land. It becomes covered, sealed, its own grave.

Ecosystems are something large to be saved, if at all, by the government at great expense and set aside to be enjoyed by all of us in some recreational or contemplative fashion. An individual doesn't think of himself as owning an ecosystem. The responsibility! Too much. Besides, there's something about the word that denotes the impossibility of ownership. *Land*, on the other hand, is like a car or a house; it has economic currency. Aldo Leopold defined land as *a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals;* it was synonymous with ecosystem, and he argued that we all have an obligation to protect and preserve it. It was over fifty years ago that Leopold wrote his elegantly reasoned essay "The Land Ethic," but it has had about as much effect on the American conscience as a snowflake. Seven thousand acres are lost to development each day in this country. Ecosystem becomes land becomes parcel.

On Siesta Key, "open space" (of which there is now none), when bought by the county years ago, is being utilized as beach parking or tennis courts. "Raw" land no longer exists, though a few lots are still available, some with very nice trees, most of which will have to go (unfortunately) in order to accommodate the house that will be built on what is now considered a "site." We hardly can get all ecosystem emotional over a site. A banyan tree will most assuredly have to go because it is in its nature to grow extravagantly and demand a great deal of space. Trees, of course, cannot *demand* anything. As with the wild animals who have certain requirements or preferences—a clutter and cover, long natural hours of friendly concealing dark—anything they *need* can be ignored or removed right along with them.

In 1969, I bought Lots 27, 28, and 29 on Midnight Pass Road, a two-lane road that ended when the key did. There was a small cypress house, no beauty, and an even smaller cypress cottage. They were single-story affairs with flat roofs, built on poured slabs. The lots together cost $24,000. In 1972, I bought Lots 30 and 31 for $12,000. Lagoon land wasn't all that desirable. There was no access to open water. Bay land was more valuable, and even then Gulf front was only for the wealthy. Beachfront is invaluable because no one can build on the sea; the view is "protected." I could hear the Gulf on my small acre; it was, in fact, only several hundred feet away, concealed by a scrim of mangroves. The houses that were to be built over there were grand but still never quite exceeded the height of



bicycle path. Homeowners were responsible for keeping the "path" tidy, and I appeared out there dutifully with broom and rake, pushing away the small oak leaves from the trees that towered overhead, discle[illegible] that efficient concrete for the benefit of no[illegible] joggers. Bicyclists preferred to use the road. Any stubborn palmetto that fanned outward or seeded palm that once graced the strip of land outside my rickety wall would be snipped back [illegible] part for the public way. The bottles, [illegible] me to reap. As owner of Lots 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31, I had 370 feet of path to maintain. I became aware, outside my fence, of the well known Florida light, a sort of blandly insistent *[illegible]* and resigned. Cars sped past. Large house[illegible] estates on half an acre with elaborate [illegible] gates. Palmetto scrub had given way to lawns. Trees existed [illegible]ly trimmed accents, all dead wood removed. Trees not [illegible]

THE SOUND OF CONSTRUCTION WAS ALMOST CONSTANT, BUT NO ONE APPEARED TO BE LIVING IN THE ENLARGED, UPGRADED PROPERTIES AROUND ME

sound by landscape professionals were felled; the palms favored were "specimen" ones. Dead animals and birds appeared more and more frequently on the road. Cars sped past.

Behind my wobbly fence, I pottered about. The houses were built in the forties, and the land had the typical homesteaded accoutrements of that time—a few citrus trees, some oleander and hibiscus for color, a plot cleared for a few vegetables and Shasta daisies, a fig left to flourish for shade, and live oaks left to grow around the edges. The ghastly malleucas were available in nurseries then and were often planted in rows as a hedge. The man I bought the land from was a retired botanist, and he had planted avocado and lychee nut trees too, as well as a grove of giant bamboo from which he liked to make vases and bowls and various trinkets. There was bougainvillea, azalea, gardenia, powder puff and firecracker plant, crotons, wild lilies, sea grape, and several orchid trees. Of the palms there was a royal, sabal, many cabbage, pineapple, sago—queen and king—reclinata, fishtail, sentry, traveler's, and queen. There were cypresses, jacaranda, and two banyan trees. There was even a tiny lawn with small cement squares to place the lawn chairs on. The mangroves in this spot had been cut back for a view of the idly flowing tea-colored lagoon. Elsewhere they grew—the red and the black—in the manner each found lovely, in hoops and stands, creating bowers and thickets and mazes of rocking water and dappling light.

This was my acre in Florida. Visitors ventured that it looked as though it would require an awful lot of maintenance, though they admired my prescience in buying the extra lots, which would surely be worth something someday. The house had a certain "rustic charm," but most people didn't find the un-air-conditioned, un-dehumidified air all that wholesome and wondered why I kept the place so damn dark, for there were colored floods widely available that would dramatize the "plantings." I could bounce more lights off the water, you could hardly even tell there was water out there, and what was the sense of hiding that? And despite the extraordinary variety, my land seemed unkempt. There were vines and Brazilian pepper and carrotwood, there were fire-ant mounds, rats surely lived in the fronds of the untrimmed palms. My acre looked a little hesitant, small and vulnerable, *young*. Even the banyan tree was relatively young. It had put down a few aerials but then stopped for a good decade as if it were thinking . . . *What's the use. I'm straddling Lots 29 & 30 and I'm not known as an accommodating tree. When the land gets sold, I'll be sold, too and will fall in screaming suttee* . . . Or sentiments of that sort.

As for the birds and animals, well, people didn't want raccoons and opossums and armadillos, and their cats would eat the baby rabbits. Too disgusting, but that's just the way nature *was*. And although I had cardinals and towhees and thrashers and mockingbirds and doves and woodpeckers, they did, too; as a matter of fact their cardinals were nesting in a place where they could actually see them, right near the front door, and that was getting to be quite the nuisance. As for the herons, you found them everywhere, even atop the dumpsters behind the 7-Eleven. Such beggars. You had to chase them away from your bait bucket when you were fishing from the beach. Did I fish in the lagoon? There were snapper in there, redfish, maybe even snook. I could get the mullet with nets. Why didn't I fish?

The years flowed past. Some of the properties on the lagoon fell to pure speculation. Mangroves were pruned like any hedging material; in some cases, decks were built over them, causing them to die, though they remained ghostily rooted. Landowners on the Gulf did not molest their mangrove. The lagoon to them was the equivalent of a back alley. Why would they want to regard the increasing myriad of houses huddled there? I traveled, I rented the place out, I returned. There were freezes, we were grazed by hurricanes. An immense mahoe hibiscus died back in a cold snap, and two years later a tall, slender, smooth-barked tree it had been concealing began producing hundreds of the pinkest, sweetest, juiciest

grapefruit I have ever tasted. The water oak that fed it ache[illegible] every year limit rotted and fell. There were lovely [illegible] which each winter in the nights the chuck will[illegible] would [illegible]

That would drive me nuts, several of my neighbors [illegible]

The sound of construction was almost constant, but it [illegible] to actually living in the remodeled, enlarged, upgraded property around me. I had cut out sections of my side fences to allow oak limbs to grow in their tortured specific manner, but my neighbor's arborist would [illegible] ally be instructed to lop them off at the property line. This was [illegible] the owner's right. There was the sound of trimmers, leaf blowers, pool pumps, pressure cleaners; the smell of chemicals from pest and lawn services. Maintenance maintenance maintenance. Then the county began cutting back the live oak limbs that extended over the bicycle path, even though one would have to be an idiot on a pogo stick to bump into one.

Sliced sure as bread, the limbs, one at least five feet in diameter and green with resurrection fern and air plants, were cut back to the fence line.

It was then I decided to build the wall.

The year was 1990. The wall was of cement block with deep footers, and it ran the entire length of the property except for a twelve-foot opening, which was gated in cedar. It cost about $10,000, and two men did it in two months. The wall was ten feet high. It was not stuccoed. I thought it was splendid. I didn't know many people in the neighborhood by then, but word got back to me that some did not find it attractive. What did I have back there, a prison? To me, it was the people peering past the baby Tajs on the animal-corpse-littered road who had become imprisoned. Inside was land—a mysterious, messy fountain of energy; outside was something else—not land in any meaningful sense but a diced bright salad of colorful real estate, pods of investment, its value now shrilly, sterilely economic.

Behind the wall was an Edenic acre, still known to the tax collector as Lots 27, 28, 29, 30, and 31. Untransformed by me, who was neither gardener nor crafty ecological restorer, the land had found its own rich dynamic. Behind the wall were neither grounds nor yard nor garden, not park, nor even false jungle, but a functioning wild landscape that became more remarkable each year. Of course there was the humble house and even humbler cottage, which appeared less and less important to me in the larger order of things. They were shelters, pleasant enough but primarily places from which to look *out* at the beauty of a world to which I was irrelevant except for my role of preservationist, a world I could be interested with only to the extent of my not harming it. The wildlife could hardly know that their world in that place existed only because I rather than another, *owned* it. I knew, though, and the irrationality of the arrangement, the premise, angered me and made me feel powerless, for I did not feel that the land was mine at all but rather belonged to something larger that was being threatened by something absurdly small, the ill works and delusions of—as William Burroughs liked to say—*homo sap.*

Although the wall did not receive [illegible] approval from an ecological point of view was resounding. The banyan, as though reassured by the audacious wall, flung down [illegible] The [illegible] story flourished; the oaks soared, creating a great grave canopy. Plantings that had seemed tentative when I had bought them from botanical gardens years before took hold. The [illegible] ferns spread. It was odd. I fancied that I had made an inside for the outside to be safe in. From within, the wall vanished; green growth pressed against it, staining it naturally brown and green and black. It muffled the sound and heat of the road. Inside was cool and dappled, hummed with birdsong. There were owls [illegible] in a casuarina that leaned out over the [illegible], a tree of [illegible] good to [illegible]

WHEN ONE HAS TO SELL PROPERTY, WHEN ONE HAS TO MOVE ON, ONE IS EXPECTED TO BE SENSIBLE, REALISTIC, EVEN CANNY, ABOUT IT. I WAS NOT

tion and half-dead, but the osprey deeply favored it, folding himself into it invisibly in a few seconds each nightfall. A pair of yellow-crowned night herons nested in a slash pine in the center of Lot 30. Large birds with a large hidden nest, their young—each year three!—not hasty in their departure. A single acre was able to nurture so many lives, including mine. Its existence gave me great happiness.

And yet it was all an illusion too, a shadow box, for when I opened the gates or canoed the lagoon, I saw an utterly different world. This was a world that had fallen only in part to consortiums of developers; it had fallen mostly plat by plat to individuals, who, paradoxically, were quite conformist in their attitude toward land, or rather the scraped scaffolding upon which their real property was built. They lived in penury of a very special sort, but that was only my opinion. In *their* opinion they were living in perfect accord with the values of the time, successfully and cleverly, taking advantage of their advantages. Their attitudes were perfectly acceptable; they were not behaving unwisely or without foresight. They had maximized profits, and if little of nature had been preserved in the arrangement, well, nature was an adornment not to everyone's taste, a matter really of personal tolerance and sympathy. Besides, Nature was not far away, supported by everyone's tax dollars and preserved in state and federal parks. And one could show one's appreciation for these places by visiting them at any time. Public lands can be projected as having as many recreational, aesthetic, or environmental benefits as can be devised for them, but private land, on this skinny Florida key and almost everywhere in this country, is considered too economically valuable to be conserved. Despoliation of land in its many, many guises is the custom of the country. Privately, one by one, the landowner makes decisions that render land, in any other than financial terms, moot. Land is something to be "built out."

In contrast to its surrounds, my acre appeared an evasion of reality, a construct, a moment poised before an inevitable after. How lovely it was, how fortunate I was. Each day my heart recognized its great worth. It was invaluable to me. The moment came when I had to sell it.

Leopold speaks of the necessity of developing an ecological conscience, of having an awareness of land in a philosophical rather than an economic sense. His articulation of our ethical obligations to the land is considered by many to be quite admirable. We celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of this articulation (if not its implementation) in 1999. A pretty thought, high-minded. And yet when one has to *move on* (if not exactly in the final sense) one is expected to be sensible, realistic, even canny, about property. I was not in the comfortable kind of financial situation where I could deed my land to a conservation group or land trust. Even if I could have, it would probably have been sold to protect more considerable sanctuary acreage elsewhere, for it was a mere acre in a pricey neighborhood, not contiguous with additional habitat land, though the lagoon did provide a natural larger dimension. I had been developing an ecological conscience for thirty years, and I could continue to develop it still certainly, become a good steward somewhere else, because once I had decided to sell, this particular piece of land and all the creatures that found it to be a perfect earthly home would be subject to erasure in any meaningful ecological sense, and this would not be considered by society to be selfish, cruel, or irresponsible.

"Wow, it's great back here," the realtor said. "I often wondered what the heck was going on back here. I'm looking forward to showing this place."

I told him I wanted to sell the land as a single piece, with deed restrictions, these being that the land could never be subdivided; that the buildings be restricted to one house and cottage taking up no more land than the originals; and that the southern half of the property be left in its natural state as wildlife habitat.

"Nobody wants to be told what they can do with their land," he told me, frowning. "I'll mention your wishes, but you'll have to accept a significant reduction in price with those kinds of restrictions. When we get an offer you and the buyer can negotiate the wording of the agreement. I'm sure the type of person who would be attracted to this property wouldn't want to tear it all apart."

"Really," I said, "you don't think"

I went through a number of realtors.

With a lawyer I drew up a simple and enforceable document that the realtors found so unnerving that they wouldn't show it right away to interested parties, preferring word wobble and expressions of goodwill. There were many people who *loved* the land, who *loved* nature, but would never buy anything that was in essence not free and clear. Or they had no problem with the restrictions *personally*, but when they had to sell (and Heaven forbid that they would right away of course) they could not impose such coercive restraints on others. The speculators and builders had been dismissed from the beginning. These were people of a more maverick bent, *caring* people who loved Florida, loved the key—wasn't it a shame there was so much development, so much change. When they saw the humble document they said 1) who does she think she *is*? 2) she's crazy, 3) she'll never sell it. Over the months the realtors took on a counseling manner with me as though I needed guidance through this dark stubborn wood of my own making, as though I needed to be talked down from my irrational fanciful resolve. They could sell the land for $200,000 more if I dropped the restrictions. My acre could be destroyed naturally; a hurricane could level everything, and the creatures, the birds, would have to go somewhere else anyway. With the money I'd make marketing it smartly, I could buy a hundred acres, maybe more, east of the interstate. There was a lot of pretty ranchland over there. I could conserve that. A lot of pressure would be on that land in a few years; I could do more by saving that. Sell and don't look back! That's what people did. You can't look back.

I'm not looking back, I said.

And I wasn't.

I was looking ahead, seeing the land behind the wall still existent, still supporting its nests and burrows—a living whole. I was leaving it—soon I would no longer be personally experiencing its loveliness—but I would not abandon it, I would despise myself if I did. If I were to be party to a normal real estate transaction, I would be dooming it, I would be—and this is not at all exaggerated—signing a warrant for its death. (Perhaps the owners of the four new houses that could—and would, most likely—be built would have the kindness to put out some birdseed.) I wanted more than money for my land, more than the mere memory of it, the luxury of conserving it falsely and sentimentally through lyrical recall. I wanted it to *be*.

It took eight months to find the right buyer. Leopold's "philosophers" were in short supply in the world of Florida real estate. But the ideal new owners eventually appeared, and they had no problem with the contract between themselves and the land. I had changed no hearts or minds by my attitude or actions; I had simply found—or my baffled but determined realtors had—people of my persuasion, people who had a land ethic, too. Their duties as stewards were not onerous to them. They did not consider the additional legal documents they were obliged to sign an insult to their personal freedom. They were aware that the principle was hardly radical. An aunt had done a similar thing in New England, preserving forty acres of meadow and woodland by conservation easement. They had friends in California who had similarly sold and conserved by deed four hundred acres of high desert. And here was this enchanted acre.

It had been accomplished. I had persisted. I was well pleased with myself. Selfishly I had affected the land beyond my tenure. I had gotten my way.

And with all of this, I am still allowed to guess it so. ■

FLEUR

Thorny truths about the global flow

"However," wrote Goethe, "are the beautiful words and hieroglyphs of nature, with which she shows how much she loves us" ... a flourish of metaphor that is, alas, increasingly inapt. To survive the trip from flower-producing countries in Latin America to warehouses in Miami, to retail florists, to somebody's sweetheart, the cut flowers in this recent FTD.com catalogue, like most of the more than 4 trillion sold in the U.S. last year, were genetically engineered to stay preternaturally fresh up to two weeks after harvest. Designer-seed firms made them sturdy enough to be shipped in bulk, light enough to defray air-cargo costs, and uniform enough to be sorted and graded. Then there are the aesthetic concerns. Nearly every detail—the curl of a lily's petal, the fluffiness of a carnation, the confectionary pink of a rose—was selected for maximum desirability according to the specifications of fashion experts and marketing consultants. These blooms are hieroglyphs, in other words, not of nature but of global commerce.



Carnations are native to Europe, but in all likelihood this one, like 92 percent of those imported into the U.S. in 1999, came from Colombia. The U.S. Agency for International Development introduced floriculture to Colombia in 1965 as an alternative to the country's most notorious crop—coca. That first year farms on the impoverished savanna outside Bogotá yielded 17 tons of carnations, sold to the U.S. for $20,000. By 1980, the flower harvest had reached 37,000 tons; and exports, $100,000,000—still a small share of the multibillion-dollar global market. Then, in the 1990s, in reward for antinarcotic efforts, Europe and the U.S. dropped all tariffs on Colombian flowers. Today, the country is the largest producer in the world after Holland, and nearly half the flowers sold in the U.S. come from the Bogotá savanna. The people who live there, however, are still poor. Most earn under $200 a month working on flower farms, 20 percent of which were bought out in 1998 by U.S.-based Dole Food, the largest employer in Colombia. Food formerly grown in the region now has to be imported. Coca, meanwhile, is still Colombia's most notorious—and lucrative—crop, though there is a flower that rivals it: the opium poppy.

As shown, this bouquet features some of the cheapest flowers money can buy. Ecuadoran farms sold 300 million roses to U.S. importers in 1999 at an average price of 22¢ a stem; Colombian carnations fetched 11¢; Costa Rican lilies, a dime. Competition among poor countries to sell flowers to rich ones has pushed supply up, prices down. Corporate producers with high volume and low labor costs, such as Dole, can still make millions on slim margins, but small flower farms are failing worldwide. For this bouquet, growers would get about $4, more than $3 of which would go to overhead—U.S.-made pesticides, Dutch seeds, Israeli greenhouses, Third World labor. After shipping fees (around 3¢ per stem by air, Bogotá to Miami, depending on fuel prices) and the importer's markup, a florist in [illegible] would buy these flowers wholesale for less than $15.

U MAL

by Niala Maharaj and Donovan Hohn



Niala Maharaj, a writer based in Amsterdam, is [illegible] *with Critical Perspectives on the Commercialization of the Third World* [illegible]

Donovan Hohn is an associate editor at [illegible] *azine.*

GERMAN LESSONS

When home is not where the homeland is

By Joel Agee

Wo gehen wir denn hin? Immer nach Haus.

Where are we going? Always homeward.

—Novalis

There is a German word, a feminine noun, that denotes like no other the welcoming warmth and sheltering intimacy of an origin to which we can return. "*Heimat*." Strangely, it has no English equivalent. "Home" comes close—its German cognate, "*Heim*," actually forms the root of "*Heimat*"—but it is too narrow; it usually means an apartment. The "land" in "homeland" makes the image more ample but too geographic. What the German word means is, simply, the place where one feels at home, and that home need not have political or even physical boundaries. When Elias Canetti, a Sephardic Jew who was born in Bulgaria, studied in Zurich, lived in London, and wrote in German, was asked what he considered his *Heimat*, his reply was: the German language.

I was born in New York City in 1940. When I was a year old, my American mother left my American [illegible] with her to Mexico. There she married a German expatriate who became, in [illegible], my biological father. We stayed in Mexico [illegible]

[illegible] In the Heimat I Have No Nation" appeared in February 1996

course of that time, I learned to speak Spanish better than my parents, better than I spoke English. I played with Mexican children in Mexican schools. A Mexican maid, Zita, loved and scolded me like a second mother. I thought of myself as Mexican. Nevertheless, I knew I was a foreigner. No one deliberately made me feel that, but I sensed it nonetheless. I wanted to be like the others. I wanted to sing those proud Mexican songs as if they were about me: "*¡Soy Mexicano del Norte!*" It seemed to me that talking like a native should be enough to make you the same, but it wasn't. I asked—insisted—on having my hair shorn to make me resemble Mexican street children. It didn't work: the bald head made me a *pelón*. Why didn't they call bald Mexican children *pelones*? Because a bald Mexican child is Mexican, but a bald gringo is ridiculous. I put on a big sombrero. That covered up the baldness, but it didn't make me Mexican.

When I was eight, my parents took my two-year-old brother and me to the part of Germany that a year later became the Deutsche Demokratische Republik, DDR for short. The German kids didn't call me a gringo. They called me an *Ami*. How to become German? Obviously, I had to learn the language, but would that be enough—since it hadn't been in Mexico? It was enough. *Zum Glück!*

"*Glück*" is another German word without an exact English equal. Sometimes it means "luck," sometimes "happiness," but there is a third meaning that combines the first two—outer good fortune, inner felicity—and for this plenary good we have no single word. Of course there may not exist in reality such a thing as "*Glück*" in the hermetic sense suggested by that fluting *ü* embowered among consonants, but it exists in the mind—vaguely where the world utters itself in English, and rather tangibly in German, where that old word, "*Glück*," stands waiting like a cage for the soul that would lose itself in it and sing. Beautiful poems have been made of this word, sublime music from the painful joy it encloses.

But I was speaking of "*Heimat*," which could be defined as the province of "*Glück*" (its source in memory, its goal in longing), and my happy discovery, as a newly arrived immigrant, that in Germany, unlike Mexico, I could be released from the exile of foreignness simply by learning the language.

It really was simple. A tutor apprenticed me in the fundamentals of syntax and vocabulary; two or three boys in my village grade school offered themselves as guides to the subtler refinements of pronunciation. But the real teacher was the fluid, breathing, intelligent life of language itself, and the student so swiftly taking increasingly difficult degrees of initiation, all the way up to the heights of poetry, all the way in to the arcane wit of dialect, was not the boy trying to memorize his conjugation tables but a miraculously responsive nervous system alerted by day and by night to the challenge of optimal adaptation: how to fit in, how to be the same as the others, no longer different, no longer the other myself.

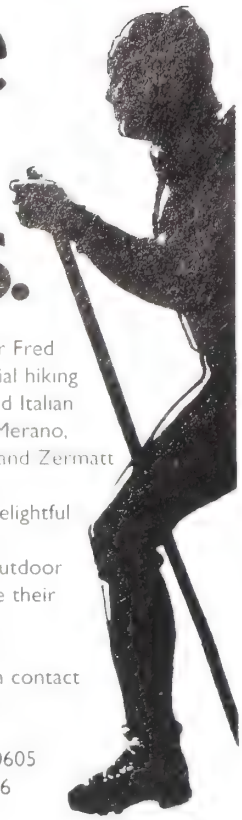
The State, of whose existence I could have no notion yet, had rites as remarkably consonant with mine. Through my school, I was offered a virtual certificate of success, a blue neckerchief, identical in cut and color with dozens of other blue neckerchiefs worn by children in the village. That was the insignia of the Young Pioneers. Learning to tie the knot was an initiation in itself. And with the honor of membership came a set of statutes that called us to high moral duty: Young Pioneers are *examples* (of maturity, comportment, studiousness, etc.) to other children. Young Pioneers are *helpful*, ready to help where help is needed. Not *should be*, but *are*. Virtue conferred by the sacred act of induction (a vow? Probably, I don't remember), and repossessed anytime you desired by the magical act of knotting your blue neckerchief in front of a mirror.



It is no different with collective identity than with the personal ego: sooner or later you meet with the other, the "We" that is not your own. There were children in the village—the majority, in those early years—who did not join the Young Pioneers. I don't remember any outright animosity, but a difference was noticeable, particularly in the matter of virtue. Young Pioneers don't crack jokes behind the teacher's back. Young Pioneers don't paint obscene symbols on walls. Young Pioneers don't shoot stones with a slingshot. Young Pioneers don't have a whole lot of fun. I realized that after a while.

Those were the infant days of the Cold War, when the borders were open and lightly patrolled. The solution was simple: Blur the boundary,

Schiller put it in his "Ode to Joy," but
with rockets and atom
joy, leaving us children to
With the passage from grade school to high school came another graduation: from the Young Pioneers to the Communist Youth League. I cached the only hand a document of my condition at
memory. It is my *Personalmusters*, the
dark-blue book is a personal message
There follows a four point list of in



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page, in the upper left corner, is a photograph of my face taken in quarter profile a month after my fifteenth birthday. The two circular metal staples employed to clamp the picture to the page also punched round holes through the paper, like oversized bullets or small cannonballs, one through my right collarbone and another one grazing my forehead. The upper rim of the seal of the Potsdam District Police raises the letters CHE VOLKS from my left shoulder, and another seal, or possibly the lower rim of the same, marks the back of my head with the characters 183, also in high relief. A rectangular stamp, violet, sidles up to the edge of my face to declare me "Valid for 10 years." My lips, near the sharp lower corner of the stamp, are set in a manner that an American friend generously interprets as "defiant": Actually I was pushing forward my lower jaw to counteract the effect of what I considered a weak chin. Defiance can be justly attributed only to a tuft of hair over my right ear that refused to be flattened down with water. The eyes are set on nothing at all, unless it's the opposite page, where my "surname at birth" is neatly spelled out in black ink: "Uhse." Not true: my stepfather, Bodo Uhse, had never formally adopted me. And my nationality: "Deutsch"—also not true. By the letter of the law, I should have been registered as a foreigner and given a corresponding document, but my parents had asked a highly placed friend to make a semilegal arrangement on my behalf—to spare me the pain of exclusion, to help me to feel at home.

Stamped on all sides with false legitimations, this face looks sad, guilty, obedient, and absent, a juvenile Adam expelled from the garden. How did it happen? He never even noticed the snake. And no Eve in sight. What was that taste in his mouth? A word, "We." All the new songs had that word in them; none of them had the word "I." He sang them for the love of singing, for the sake of belonging: "*Weil wir jung sind, ist die Welt so schön!*" Imagine singing a song like that, thirty or forty voices strong: "Because we are young, the world is so beautiful!" Because. We. He was lost.

Five years later, my parents divorced, and my mother obtained for me through the American Embassy in West Berlin, and with the help of an American lawyer, a passport that identified me correctly by my true patronymic and my rightful nationality. This was a very nice ticket to have; it promised swift passage from a messy pattern of officially recorded failure in one *Heimat* (I was a lousy student) to a perfectly clean slate in another. Amazing privilege! This is what certain gangsters receive in exchange for their testimony against the mob: a little plastic surgery, a wrecked existence swapped for a fictive whole one, a move to some palm-fronded spot where no one knows you; in short, a new destiny and a new self. If only things were that simple.

Somewhere in the archives of the Stasi, the infamous East German secret police, there must still exist a record of the arrest and interrogation of a young man, sometime in the fall of 1963, who presented himself to the border authorities at Checkpoint Charlie with two documents of identity, one made out in Potsdam to Joel Uhse, the other in New York to Joel Agee. The suspect's bizarre explanation, first to the guards at Checkpoint Charlie and then, after a grim silent car ride through darkening streets, to professional interrogators at Stasi headquarters—that he was not and had never been a citizen of the DDR, though his *Personalausweis* identified him as such; that the *Personalausweis* was in fact a fraudulent document produced for his convenience and comfort by the DDR government; that he was and had always been an American citizen and had left the DDR with its government's blessings; that he was a filmmaker on his way to the Leipzig film festival; that his motive in showing the border authorities his spurious *Personalausweis* was simply fear of their finding it on him if he *didn't* show it; that his purpose in bringing it at all was to identify himself to

DEFA, the East German film company, as the stepson of the recently deceased winner of the national prize for literature, Bodo Uhse, so that they would equip and finance a film he, the suspect, intended to make about carnival season in the Cuban province of Oriente. All these avowals and sincere protestations served only to heighten his captors' suspicion.

"What agency do you work for?"

"I'm not a spy. If you call Alexander Abusch, the former minister of culture, he'll vouch for me. He's known me since I was a child."

"Who sent you?"

"No one sent me. Why don't you call Alexander Abusch?"

"Because we're not stupid."

"Why would a spy show up at your border with two IDs?"

"That's what we're trying to find out."

Two men took turns stirring this thick little dialogue until there was neither spice nor substance left in it. They stared at me with the desperation of boredom and perhaps the first glimmers of hatred. As for me, I was full of goodwill toward them. I wasn't worried. We were all socialists here, sharers in a common truth. To pass the time, I observed them for future reference in my journal. There wasn't much to record. They smoked a lot. They wore gray suits. One of them was bald, the other wore two-tone shoes. Above them hung a picture of General Secretary Walter Ulbricht with an omniscient smile. By the window stood a shelf bearing law books and volumes of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

"Who are you?"

That question took me aback.

"You can't be both these people."

"I'm not. I'm one person. And these are, I mean . . . they're passports. One person, two passports."

I thought I was being helpful. They didn't think so. They looked angry. I pulled myself together, resolved to cooperate in every way.

I remember dreams from that period, nightmares in which I shuttled from one country and language to another, often in a train patrolled by suspicious sol-

diers. I [illegible] my being asked for my papers and not [illegible] the one that made me guilty. Many years later I learned that this is the prototypical dream of exiles, immigrants and prisoners, and not just prisoners but also released or escaped convicts. The [illegible] portion, inside or outside the barrier, seems to make little difference to the psyche as long as the barrier is there. The psyche wants wholeness, not in- or outsideness, and that's why her notions of freedom are different from those of the ego. More particularly, though, my dream was the prototypical East German dream. Here is one example: An old school friend in East Berlin told me in the late seventies that he had a repeated nightmare in which he found himself strolling on Kurfürstendamm, gazing at shop windows and pretty girls, and suddenly realizing that he had to get back to the other side of the Wall within minutes or else be found guilty of treason. He runs to the east, but there is the Wall, solid and gateless, the guards in their turrets have already spotted him, the minutes are advancing. He is trapped in the free world when the law, the law of the soul, of the whole dream, says: Get back to the place of your bondage or be exiled forever.

A couple of hours later, my stomach began to grumble, and the bald man introduced a startling new theme in the interrogation.

"Are you hungry?"

"Yes."

"Do you like blood sausage?"

"I've never tried it."

The bald man opened a sandwich tin and handed me half of his sandwich. I took a bite.

"Not here," the man with the two-tone shoes said sternly. "Out the door, turn left, sit down on the bench at the end of the corridor. We'll get there when we call you."

A bench on the bench where I sat waiting [illegible] the corridor proclaimed all the laws of rectilinear [illegible] and converging doors right and left, one row of receding and converging



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on the bench was shrouded in darkness, for the two ceiling lights nearest me didn't work. This position afforded me the unique point of view of an unnoticed observer at Stasi headquarters.

I cite from my notes of the following day:

Telephones ringing, muffled voices, distant. A door opens. I stop breathing. A man in a green suit steps out, says something over his shoulder, then the man takes a few steps in my direction, stops, shakes his head, backs up and, unperturbedly, takes a notebook out of his breast pocket, scribbles something in it, puts the pen back, returns the book to his breast pocket, walks out, stops in front of a door about ten meters away from me, puts his ear to the door, hesitates, then:

"Herein!"

The man in the green suit steps in, closes the door behind him.

More ringing telephones, mumbling voices, distant. Echoing shouts and the trample of feet in the stairwell at the far end of the corridor. Four soldiers appear, hustling along a young man whose hands are cuffed behind his back. They shove him into the last room on my right, lock the door, and go back downstairs, laughing.

Quiet. Telephones, mumbling voices. A familiar door opens. It is the man in the green suit. He walks down the corridor with a jaunty stride, jangling a bunch of keys in his hand, opens the room where the prisoner is, closes the door behind him. A moment later a shot, piercing scream. The door opens, the man in the green suit steps out. He locks the door, puts the keys in his pocket, walks back in the direction he came from, adjusts the fit of his jacket with an athlete's rolling shrug, [illegible] and disappears from my field of vision.

Now it is time to introduce another German word: "*Schlüsselerlebnis*." [illegible] translation. The English sounds dry-bookish, but in German the compounding of the two words charges them with the potency of a seed, or a bomb. The idle heiress robbed of her privileges, the pauper refused fare, and spurned by the hard-working poor, the devout Communist learning that some venerable relic was manufactured in Taiwan; the young child who sees his parents in a grunting, moaning heap on their bed—each of these has had a *Schlüsselerlebnis*.

I hear my soul-critic's voice protesting, the familiar voice of a contentious reader who knows German as well as I do:

"A scream in the secret police headquarters—if this is a Schlüsselerlebnis, *so is my ingrown toenail. It may be unpleasant, but surely not out of the ordinary."*

You don't know what faith is, my quarrelsome friend. Faith and loyalty.

To what? To whom?

To the man in whose name I had lived for twelve years of my life, and whose grave I had come to visit: my stepfather, Bodo, who wanted his children to be among those who inherit the kingdom of heaven on earth.

"You didn't tell that to the border guards."

It was none of their business. That was between me and Bodo. As I said, I was loyal to him.

"To him and his folly."

His folly, yes. His foolish, generous faith in the perfectibility of man by political arrangement. And that was why I was shocked by the sound of a scream in an East German secret police station.

I must have sat there for another half hour. I was scared. I had come home through the cellar door and discovered a foul-smelling basement I had never known existed. There were rats in there, snakes. But no animal behaves like this. What should I call them, fascists? Fascists don't read Marx and Lenin. Whatever they were, I no longer felt safe in their company.

At last the man with the two-tone shoes came out to conduct me to my next interrogator, a stocky young man with blond hair and an ironic, not unfriendly expression in his eyes. He asked me to sit down on a chair facing his desk. The man with the two-tone shoes handed him my passports and several typewritten sheets of paper and left the room. The blond man quickly perused the report, compared my face with the two passport pictures, reread the report, shook his head with a snort of derision—was it at me or his colleagues?—and raised his eyes.

"Herr Uhse, Mr. Agee—which should I call you?"

"Agee."

"Pleased to meet you. Geiring."

We shook hands across his desk.

"You want to make a film?"

"Yes. In Cuba."

"You want help from DEFA?"

"Yes, I need it."

"You think they will be interested?"

"I hope so."

"In Carnival?"

"In Cuba."

"Let's say we help you. What would you give us in return?"

"A good film."

"That's not enough."

"A good *socialist* film."

"Films are expensive. This isn't Hollywood. We're talking about a state budget. Money is needed to mend roads, build factories, train teachers. Socialism is not a carnival."

"I know."

"If you did something of genuine material value for us, we might support your Cuban project. In fact, I can guarantee that."

"What are you thinking of?"

"A show of loyalty. We would ask you to live in West Germany for, say, a few months. You would make contact with certain people there—young, progressive people like yourself—and supply us with regular reports about their activities. We would pay you, naturally—quite well, I might add. You would have a nice apartment."

"That's very interesting," I said. "It's a generous offer. I will think about it. But right now . . . I can't make such a big decision just like that."

"I understand," he said.

"I need time to think, and I'm tired. I need some sleep."

"Of course."

"May I go now?"

"I'll take you to a hotel."

"I already have a hotel."

"Where?"

"On Kurfürstendamm."

He smiled: "No good. We're not finished yet."

"What's lacking?"

"An answer to my proposal, for one. Yes or no? It doesn't have to be now. You can sleep on it."

"Where?"

"I'll find you a room."

He was overestimating his power. Not even a Stasi officer could procure a vacant hotel room in East Berlin, not after midnight and not on the spur of the moment. After five or six tries, Geiring gave up and drove me to the home of an aunt in the country—a picture-book house behind a white lattice fence where a picture-book proletarian couple greeted me with smiles and bows as if a prince had come to honor their dwelling.

"From so far away—America! Can we offer you anything? I'm afraid we don't have much . . ."

"No, thank you, I just need some sleep."

They guided me upstairs. Geiring waved an ironic bye-bye from below. The guest room: a fat feather blanket on a short bed, flying geese on the wall, lacy curtains, dried flowers in a bowl on the night table.

"Good night."

"Good night."

"If you need anything, just knock."

"Thank you very much."

"You're welcome."

A key turned in the lock.

The first thing I heard after falling asleep was the sound of that key turning in the door again, and a knock. It was Geiring: "Lunch is ready." A light rain was tapping on the tin windowsill. I felt angry, and the thought of my meekness the previous day made me madder. Yes, meekness, not patience—subservient, cowardly meekness. A real DDR *Untertan* I'd been.[1] Today I would thump the table. Today I would demand my American passport back, yes indeed, and tell them where to deposit the other one.

Geiring, his aunt, and her husband were awaiting me at a festively set table: roast duck, mashed potatoes, sauerkraut, three kind vegetables, Soviet champagne.

"To a happy homecoming," Geiring said, lifting his glass. What was this? Flattery? Apology? Seduction? I sat down and joined in the toast. The old couple beamed at me with obsequious malice. The old man in particular sucked his champagne through fluted lips and drank me in with his eyes. Evidently Geiring had told them a few things about me. A familiar of Abusch, and a prisoner in their house! What a day, what a day!

"May I ask you a personal question?" Geiring asked.

"You mean yesterday's questions weren't personal?"

"They were analytical. This one is personal."

I gave him a nod for permission.

"You have lived here for twelve years," he said, "and three years in America. You were born there but spent your formative years here. Which do you consider your home?"

"There's a saying," I said, "'*Heimat* is where I am needed.'"

"That sounds right," Geiring said.

"But for me," I continued, "*Heimat* is where I'm not made to feel like a stranger."

He nodded thoughtfully.

"So which country is it?"

"Not here," I said.

He didn't ask any further questions, and no one else spoke. I watched him eating. He was severing the meat from his drumstick with a fork and knife, never once touching the bone with his fingers. His aunt started fidgeting with her napkin. The old man chewed rapidly with cracking jaws. Outside, birds were singing.

Geiring's aunt started clearing the table. I offered to help. "No, no," she protested, "stay seated, there's more."

"By the way," Geiring said, putting his hand in his breast pocket, "before I forget." And he handed me my passports—both of them.

If this was meant to disarm me, it worked. I put away my newfound Yankee defiance along with [illegible] passports.

Geiring's aunt [illegible] plum tart. "May I ask you a personal question?" I asked

[1] Untertan: *"subject," "vassal," "underling." But to catch the proper meaning, add to these English words a gesture of inward and outward stooping expressive of voluntary and even grateful subjection.*

PEOPLE I MET HITCHHIKING
ON U.S. HIGHWAYS
by [illegible]

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He looked at me sideways and waited.

"If you were to change to a different line of work, what would it be?"

"Psychology," he said.

"As a therapist?" Now it was I who was being ironic.

"No," he said, sincerely. "As an analyst."

After lunch Gerrit offered to drive me to the city.

"Where do you want to be taken?"

"To the Dorotheenstadtischer Friedhof. My stepfather's buried there."

When we reached the graveyard, he gave me a piece of paper with his name and phone number.

"You have three days to respond to my offer."

"And if I don't?"

He smiled ambiguously.

We shook hands in a spirit of frank mutual indifference. I thanked him for the ride.

"Goodbye."

"Goodbye."

I never saw him again.

A herd of glistening black umbrellas preceded me through the gate to the cemetery. Beneath them, uniforms—a delegation of railroad men come to take leave of a colleague. A gardener showed me the way: "Bodo Uhse? To the left, near Hegel and Fichte, ten steps before Brecht."

There it was, a tall, narrow slab with his name in tall, narrow capitals. I immediately felt a hot proprietary wrath at whoever had designed the stone, because he, or she, or they, more likely, had known him well but not well enough: these letters should reveal something recognizably his, but it was an aspect of him I had never accepted and wasn't prepared to accept now, something rigid and narrow that wasn't alive but rather was that which killed the life in him when he still lived. The life, I say, but I don't mean the raw vital urge. I mean something rarer, a vaporous poetic soul-substance that moved in slow, curving, tentative gestures, that veiled itself in cigarette smoke and made his voice trail off to near-inaudibility.

(Why didn't they use his signature? Because you cannot even recognize it as such, let alone read his name in it; because it looks like a polygraph or seismograph registering God knows what secret disturbances; because the public needs clarity and information, not riddles. But riddles can be deciphered, and if you read this scrawl in the symbolic language of forms, you can see, first of all, how he joined his given and his family name in a single burst of upward and downward pulsations, as if to belie the cut he made between his family and himself at the age of seventeen; how the first steep Gothic stab at heaven is followed by an immediate dive back to earth; a modest bourgeois elevation then, followed by another, notably shorter flight, and another vertical descent; the line stops a little above the median, as if to avoid touching earth so soon again, lifts itself feebly, sinks, picks itself up, relaxes briefly, and soars up once more, but lower than the second flight and less than half the height of the first; plunges down far beneath the median, down, down with a will, as far down as the line soared up in its first sweep, and forms a decisive, curiously angular loop at the bottom, as if to anchor its transcendence there since it cannot do so on top; flies upward again, a long, razor-straight line, up, up, but coming as it does from far below, it rises only a little beyond the median, violently drops again to the farthest bottom, leaps up a last time, just barely reaching the middle plane, bends, and expires in a soft downward curl with just the subtlest intimation of another ascent before vanishing altogether. As a graphic sign, it is elegant, beautifully balanced. How much more of his nervous, unhappy spirit it carries than those eight solemn letters.)

A German critic, Marcel Reich-Ranicki, described Bodo's literary style as "alternately cool and passionate, controlled and impetuous, simple-minded and sophisticated, ascetic and brutal, lyrical and sensual. Every sort of contradiction besets his work, polar tensions which, frequently, he can neither overcome nor elucidate. But there is one thing one always senses—the suffering of this man who [in his novel Leutnant Bertram*] wrote: 'These days it is a curse to be German.'"*

In front of the stone stood a rusty tin can half full of rainwater. I, too, just stood there getting wet, feeling the sorrow of Bodo's absence and thinking that this was something I had felt even when he was near me during his lifetime. And then memories started to rise up. I could see Bodo as I had seen him on this same path just four years ago, walking slowly next to me, one hand holding the other behind his back, his face relaxed, almost smiling. He had come here often, and now he had brought me with him, either with didactic purpose or, more probably, to share with me his pleasure in silently communing with the illustrious dead. But I had just wanted to get away, irritated by his reverence—I would much rather read the poets and thinkers than muse on their tombstones. And now, with a blunt ache, I remembered a moment when I was sitting alone in the back of our car, I was twelve or thirteen, Bodo was sitting in the front next to Jochen, our driver. It must have been on the tree-lined street that led in a two-and-a-half-hour detour alongside the border from our village to Berlin. The car had slowed down. It was drizzling, just as it was now in front of his grave. We were passing a crew of workers repairing a road. They had put down their tools and were on their way to a nearby barracks, maybe to get out of the rain. One of them was a boy a year or two older than I was, he was walking side by side with a man who had laid an arm around the boy's back and a hand on his shoulder. The man was old enough to be the boy's father, but they looked like friends. It went through my heart like a stab. As I said, my stepfather was absent much of the time, not just from me but from himself. And now that absence was stamped with the seal of eternity.

I walked on. When I came to Brecht's grave, I stopped. On the broad horizontal slab lay some fifty long-stemmed carnations in a heap—a disproportionate amount, it seemed to me, for a champion of the dispossessed. I took one of Brecht's carnations, went back to Bodo's grave, and put the flower in his rusty tin can.

DEATH: IT'S WHAT AILS YOU

Refusing to go gently

By Arthur Krystal

Discussed in this essay:

Darwin's Worms, by Adam Phillips. Basic Books, 2000. 148 pages. $20.



You who are about to read this, I salute you. Not because you are going to die anytime soon, but because you *are* going to die. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but one day your day will come. Don't think I enjoy pressing your nose against the grave. I don't. It's just that I have a date to pick with death—2067, to be precise, after which, will soon enough be picked clean by time and the elements. I'll just come out and say it. I'm appalled at the prospect of my own extinction, outraged at the certain loss of someone I know so well. Now, you might think the universe continues to be relevant matter and, of course, you'd be right. In my defense, however, I should like to point out that no one remotely like me has ever been here before, nor is anyone remotely like me will ever come again. When I use the word to say, I am speaking of you as well.

Of course, you may be among the few who don't require a salute from me: you have made your peace with mortality, or believe in a life after death, or anticipate a pleasant

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to appropriately become—that so terrible," William Hazlitt evidently thought not. "There was a time when we were not: this gives us no concern—why then should it trouble us that a time will come when we shall cease to be?... To die is only to be as we were before we were born...." Unfortunately, when writers enjoin me not to fear a state in which I cannot think or feel, I immediately think and feel that this is exactly what scares me. Philip Larkin understood this well: "Not to be here,/Not to be anywhere,/And soon; nothing more terrible, nothing more true." These lines from "Aubade," certainly the finest modern poem on the subject, reveal a man who looked death in the face and saw only himself. Yet if "Aubade" is not exactly stoical, it is hardly plaintive: "This is a special way of being afraid/No trick dispels.... Death is no different whined at than withstood."

Not every writer is mordant on the subject of death. In *Darwin's Worms*, the English psychotherapist Adam Phillips enlists both Darwin and Freud to help persuade us that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself. Phillips reminds us that death makes life precious, that without time's winged chariot hurrying near, life could not be so sweet or luminous. Well, yes. "Death is the mother of beauty," Wallace Stevens wrote, and, yes, we could not savor the moment if we didn't know that the moment would soon be gone. But from this it doesn't necessarily follow, as Phillips claims, that to love life we must come to terms with life's passing. We may think that everything worthwhile, including art and love, derives its intensity and poignancy from such knowledge, but isn't it also possible to love life without coming to terms with its passing?

Death is of course a part of Nature's plan, and Nature, Phillips avers, is neither for nor against us; if we'd only put our ears to the ground and our trust in Darwin and Freud, we would realize that Nature is correct. And because Nature *is* always correct, Phillips proposes that "suffering is only a problem for us." He recounts the following story for our approval. When asked whether he didn't think there was too much suffering in the world, the composer John Cage retorted: "No, I think there's just the right amount." Phillips likens this to smart Zen. I liken it to pure crap. Who is Cage, or anyone else for that matter, to judge what the right amount of suffering is? Let him pass a kidney stone, or witness the death of his children, and then say, "Ah, not a *soupçon* too much."

To be fair, by suffering, Phillips means the earth's throes and heaves, its growth and decay. Taking as his model Darwin's writings on geological stirrings and organic evolution, Phillips paints Nature as a wonderful system of checks and balances in which suffering just happens. Look, he says, we can never reconcile the existence of God with the existence of evil and suffering, but if God doesn't exist, and all that exists is Nature, whose program is limited to the survival of the species, then we should be able to accept that "the idea of death saves us from the idea that there is anything to be saved from. If we are not fallen creatures . . . we cannot be redeemed. If we are not deluded by the wish for immortality, transience doesn't diminish us." This is nicely put, but since transience is the road to annihilation, then transience diminishes me about as far as I can be diminished, and contemplating it, while it may heighten my appreciation of life, doesn't exactly make me happy.

And Phillips wants me to be happy. No raging against the dying of the light for him. Not only does he cheerfully slam down the lid on the coffin; he also sounds at times like a secular redeemer: "When transience is not merely an occasion for mourning, we will have inherited the earth." To be honest, I'd like to believe Phillips; hell, I'd like to *be* Phillips. Temperament does not permit this. Phillips is in favor of death; I am opposed to it. Phillips brings his considerable intelligence and learning to bear on Nature and finds that Nature is bearable; I bring whatever faculties and abilities I possess to Nature only to find that Nature presents no solution for what ails me. If you're thinking that there is a right and a wrong way to view this, let me say that I am a poor example of how to meet life—and the end of life—philosophically.

There is, to be sure, a good case to be made for accepting death with an air of fatalism or detachment. In spiritual circles, it is generally believed that the more highly evolved one is the more one feels part of a seamless web of things, a reality in which death is neither good nor bad but simply is. For Phillips, it is Nature that argues against an animus toward death; in Buddhist philosophy it is variations on the theme of non-selfhood that smooth death's frown. In the starkest possible terms Eastern philosophy teaches that the body and the ego are inessential trappings, and once the body, the locus of consciousness, is finished and done with, a person's true essence is released back into a receptive and harmonious universe. The idea of wholeness and continuation is also a tenet of the school of "transpersonal psychology," which considers the self already part of the whole, and therefore the "you" that expires simply goes on in another form. Robes and incense are not required for egolessness. Susan Blackmore, in *Dying to Live*, which takes a skeptical look at near-death experiences, concludes with confident serenity: "I have no self and 'I' own nothing. There is no one to die. There is just this moment, and now this and now this."

Forgive me, but there *is* someone who will die, the someone who wrote those words; and I shall, up to a point, be sorry when that self gives up what it owns. Because a "self" is of singular importance, I don't care if some elemental spark of life or incorporeal part of me continues on and commingles with the composite universe. How does that compensate for the loss of Me?

> QUEEN: Thou know'st 'tis common,/all that live must die,/passing through nature to eternity.
> HAMLET: Aye, Madam, 'tis common.
> QUEEN: If it be,/Why seems it so particular with thee?

That's the crux of the matter, isn't it? How can it *not* seem particular? When it comes to death, I am a cult of one, and so are you. And when either one of us dies, the cult's membership is decreased *in toto*. How, you may ask, does this square with Donne's resonant *Devotions* ("No man is an island, entire of itself . . . any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind . . .")? Well, it doesn't, does

' And I, for one, see no reason to
onceal the fact that I feel very little
npathy for people I've never met or
nely know. After all, without at least
me access to a person's internal life,
whether real or imagined (as in the
se of a celebrity), it's extremely dif
ult to feel the loss of that person.

For purposes of complete disclo
sure, let me state that not every
thing I say is said with perfect
nfidence. Much as I'd like to think
at my obstreperous humor defines
nd sustains me, there's always the
nance that when my time is up I might
ecumb to the temptation of belief or
tranquillity. All the pertinent books
ecount that when people fall ill and
ie, they pass through stages of emo
onal stress that eventually lead to ac
eptance. In transpersonal psychology,
such surrender is tantamount to
rriving at a higher state of consciousness,
he awareness that we are about to re
turn home. Kierkegaard said much the
ame thing in relation to finding God:
To let go is to lose your foothold. Tem
porarily. Not to let go is to lose your
oothold forever." This letting go in
order to find something greater than one
self is no doubt a good thing, but when
ever I feel the urge to do so, I am re
strained by William James's remark
hat "all religions begin with the cry
Help!'" And belief dictated by fear
simply doesn't wash.

The truth is, I don't want to what
I cannot understand. A time will come
when "time and I" will cease. There
will be Nothing, No Thing, only the
_____. That is clearly impossible.
Death, then, is the metaphysical prob
lem par excellence, a problem that,
oddly enough, does not seem to have
engaged the thought of most philoso
phers. Although Socrates character
ized philosophy as the practice of dy
ing, and the stoics argued that fear of
death interfered with conducting one
self properly while alive, few philoso
phers have grappled discursively with
mortality. This reticence, however,
came to a startling turnaround with
the writings of Martin Heidegger.
Since I am not being paid enough to
reread *Being and Time*, let me just say
that, for Heidegger, our consciousness
of death, manifested by angst (dread),
is essential in recovering a funda-

[illegible]
relief. As the presupposed goal of sen
our awareness of it, cuts through eter
which
meaning. It is, in fact, because of death
that
ual con
over eternity.

What Heidegger and [illegible]
Hegel before him) undertook by
formulation or inversion of priorities.
The way to Truth involved recognizing
the preconditions of theirs but redefining
the relation between the self and
the self that knows itself as a self. I
summarize shamelessly, but, essentially,
philosophy, according to Kierkegaard, has
to be done backward in order to determine
the true priority of things.
Before you can find meaning in life you
must first confront the possibility that
life has no meaning. Before you can
rest easy you must first accept the pro
found uneasiness that underscores ex
istence. The religious parallel is obvi
ous. You cannot be found unless you
first realize that you are lost. Of course,
the problem with any attempt to ob
knowledge by using a cognitive glue is
the very mind-body problem that sets
the whole process in motion. In a sense,
it's hopeless. Language and logic, which
are entwined, unravel in the face of
nothingness, which, however, exists
in actuality. And the true state of affairs
may simply be that once you draw
breath consciousness and connection
exists between being and non-being.
"Death is not an event in life,"
Wittgenstein famously wrote; "we do
not live to experience death."

Given this [illegible]
[illegible]
philosophy [illegible]
[illegible]
conceptual [illegible]
ous we become, and after a while we
may just want to throw up our hands.
[illegible]
Joyce: "How I like Nora!") Hazlitt has
[illegible]
as a general [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[

SNUFF FICTION

Dennis Cooper, gay humorist?

By Wilton Barnhardt

pages 52–

W

by gay writers and featuring gay char
acters yukking it up. But, except fo
Stephen McCauley's charming nov
els (especially *The Easy Way Out*)
there are more laughs in a half hour o
NBC's *Will & Grace* than in forty year

Which brings us to the novelist an
per Dennis Cooper, who, though d
ing his damnedest to support the tra

own sick little way, often terribly fun
ny. Cooper has now published *Per*
the final installment of a quintet o
novels that included *Closer* (1989)
Frisk (1991), *Try* (1994), and *Grad*
(1997), all paeans to his favorite fetish
est scrawny underage boys in the se
trade, hustlers and johns, abused kid
seeking further abuse, boys in kiddi

masochism and necrophilia, an array o
sex games at the farthest reach fr

Few critics have bothered to argu

isn't any. Indeed, gentle reader, y
might fail to understand how any
this has the makings of even the dark

and this course
I fear

and Mapplethorpe-level hysteri

critics having apparently dozed off a
their consoles. There's been only on
blip. When *Frisk*, the second and mos

…tesque novel, came out in 1971 …embers of the activist group Queer …ation unleashed against Cooper for …e glorification of pedophilia. …times. In San Francisco a handout …as distributed suggesting that Coop… himself murdered boys. (It's not as … Cooper didn't invite the confusion. *…rst*'s child molester and killer … named Dennis.) A death … meat followed.

But that was long ago, in a …y kingdom far, far away. Coop… is now the darling of Queer …Studies departments every… where. Kids read him and think …e's cool, rock stars champion …im, Irvine Welsh and Kathy …Acker have blurbed his books; …e is published internationally …nd has had bestsellers in the …K. Michael Cunningham de… …cribed Cooper, in the *Los …Angeles Times*, as what would …ap… en "if Jean Genet and Paul …Bowles could have a child to… …gether." And Edmund White …alled him "the spokesman for …he . . . Blank Generation." Last …year, New York University's …Fales Library (which houses the …Cooper papers) held a two-day …symposium, dedicated to the …"accomplishments" of Dennis …Cooper, at which papers were …presented by professors of liter… …ary studies, papers in which Cooper …was compared with Whitman, and the …public reception of his books (rather …wishfully) with the controversy over …*Ulysses*. Cooper is, in the word of the …hour, transgressive.

If this is all because … fashionably shock… …ing — then we needn't take much no… …tice of his working that centuries old …path of *epato le bourgeois* — but it is worth …considering whether perhaps he is the …true inheritor of the mantle of Vidal …and Burroughs and John Rechy. Ro… …mantic gay fabulists all. Or has he mere… …ly been lucky enough to write during an …era in which it was politically incorrect …to criticize the depravity of anything …

Henry and Duke are in a Satan… …-themed punk-metal band. This provides them with an unending supply of doped-out fans to abduct and execute in their compulsive sex games. In the opening pages of *P…*



…"you're definitely immortal."

During the torture, Nate seems to have second thoughts. Duke calms him:

> … happened to … to happen … and I don't … off … and I … [illegible] … that … Engine.

Okay. No, I mean I'm honored. I …

The … Cooper … Not that … such passages can be found in his best nov… … and … the darkly comic outrages, high… … to date, who is shuttled between two … Jesus Juice (Cooper isn't doing gay po… …

…enous, heedless, violent, … Ziggy has gotten too old … appearance … … tion. Ziggy thinks it would be … and gagged on the bed. "The rea… son I'm here," a perfectly self… involved Ziggy tells Robin, "is … … guess I can, and then to ask you … some … … that much about, like … dance, and … would be an amazing coup."

Robin … world, having gotten into Uncle … Ken's … Uncle Ken wakes up, after a lavish tap … … dead — but Ken, despite his pan…, knows who to call.

… "You said once . . ." Huge breath in. ". . . didn't you . . ." Huge breath out … that you'd pay a lot of money to . . ." … …

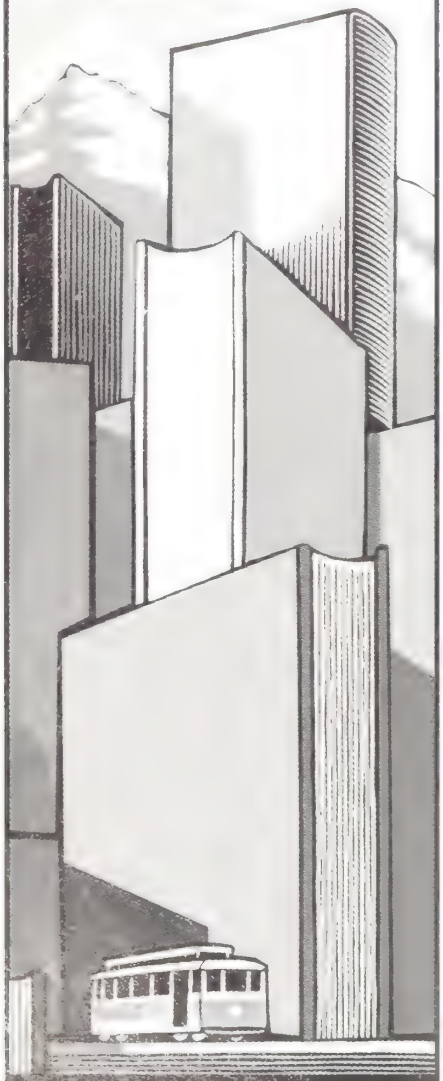
Cooper takes us places we don't want to … (at least … we don't want to go … but, once in the room, we can't … … the Dennis character in *…* … … to be. God, I hope so.

… reader … … …

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for something more. At times, an off-key tenderness seeps into his scenarios, something as close to "love" as these damned characters get. As the knife goes in, Cooper wants us to believe that even there is human communion.

Strictly speaking, pornography (from *porne*, "harlot") and erotica (from *eros*, "love") are not the same thing, though in a country steeped in Puritanism they are often confused. In this country, a woman showing her breasts on TV will cause sponsors to buckle, phone lines to jam, and Joe Lieberman to sputter, because the image is "pornographic." It is not pornographic. (It is barely, by European standards of taste, erotic.) *Porneia* to the ancients was material that excited the base animal passions, the bloodlust and depravity that temple harlots came to represent in gory, bloody, sexually excessive festivals. Christianity later applied *porneia* to, well, just about anything it didn't approve of, but the ancient sense remains more elucidating.

The oh so-civilized ancients, after all, were people who watched their enemies fed to wild beasts in the stadium, who had ingenious public tortures for removing one's gastrointestinal system while keeping the unfortunate alive, who celebrated frenzied events like the rites of Cybele, in which men cut off their genitals and flung them sacrificially against the jagged idol of the goddess. These were not people to flinch from a little child abuse in pursuit of momentary pleasure.

We like to think we're not so bloodlusty as the Dark Ages or the Age of Enlightenment, but I would direct you to remember the craving for public executions in America, as well as the popular nineteenth-century sport of eye-gouging. I refer to you the sensational *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America*, a collection of postcards and cheery souvenir programs of lynchings (a public affair that often featured castrations) from earlier in the twentieth century. This giddy thrill, this meta-sexual taste for unnatural use and torture of someone else's body, still exists through shelves of serial killer paperback fiction, *Halloween* Part Whatever teen slasher films, violent video games, and professional wrestling.

Which is all to say that American-as-apple-pie Dennis Cooper is a purveyor, like his idol the Marquis de Sade before him, of true *porneia* rather than [illegible]. Once Cooper's smartest tactic is not to dilute his narratives with the fixtures of homosexual eroticism—there's barely a phallus to be found. (Buttocks, mind you, are in plentiful supply.) His characters—all interchangeable, all similar types, abusers or abusees—talk, ramble, and make faint attempts to understand why they like what they like. It is as if the characters in Cooper's universe are defined by their desire or what desire they can whip up in others, all of them locked in a prison of sexual longing they can't escape.

Taking Cooper on his own terms, without uttering one Victorian cry of outrage, we must still admit that there is plenty of room for literary improvement. His quintet is burdened with a hell of a limitation: the mumble-mouthed teenage slackers upon whom he must attempt his poetry.

In *Period*, the final and author-proclaimed favorite volume of his pentalogy, Cooper takes us to a chat room.

> NAtetan: [My favorite band has] this great quote about that. Shit, I can't remember how it goes. Forget it. So what are you doing.
>
> [illegible] to Nate much. Can't hear or talk, 'cos of what happened, I guess. I just stay by myself a lot. Take walks. Stuff like that. It's strange. Got some ideas and opinions, but I can't remember what I have them. So they're worthless.

All right, how about at least a good story? *Period* has the least coherent plot of all his meandering novels, mainly because Cooper insists on playing mind games with his reader. George Miles (from *Closer*) may or may not be dead. Nate may be dead or he may be posing as Etan, anagrammatically. And as if Cooper knew there was no unraveling the skein, he opens with a Maurice Blanchot quote, "Keep watch over absent meaning." So perhaps we're fools even to try to ferret out a plot.

Maybe plot doesn't much matter as long as there's a sensuous payoff. We could throw convention out the window if Cooper, like Joris Karl Huysmans and Oscar Wilde and the swank nineteenth-century aesthetes before him, delivered up



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THE HALF-MAMMALS OF DIXIE

By George Singleton

Drew Gaston took a folding chair in the back of the Ramada Inn's Azalea Room without looking for any of his co-workers. He had parked next to the guest speaker's car, he figured—the vanity tag read MOTIVSR—and restrained himself from filleting the evolved Lincoln Continental, headlight to atrophied fin, with his key. Gaston's boss had paid to have his entire six-person southeastern sales force attend, in hopes that they would pick up pointers on how to talk more seafood restaurants into setting up giant aquariums in their dining areas, stocked with everything from horseshoe crabs to sand sharks, cleaned and maintained by trained and licensed aquatic technicians who spent most hours thinking up ways to kill salesmen like Gaston so *they* could travel from Virginia to Mississippi, lolling around places like Whitey's Crab Shack, the Splashing Mermaid, and Grouper Therapy. Gaston sat down and unstripped the back of his nametag. He placed it askew over the Salty's Showfish logo on his left breast pocket. Then he looked over at the woman seated next to him, a thirty-year-old wearing a black-and-silver skirt that provided her lap with only a cocktail-napkin [illegible] cloth. She crossed her right leg over toward

[illegible] These People Are [illegible] early [illegible] Rivers Prize [illegible] coaches at the South [illegible] Award in the Visual Humanities.

Gaston in such a way that created a tunnel for him to look into. He thought, This ain't going to be bad at all. Then he looked up to see that her face had a giant tic-tac-toe pattern carved into it.

A man from the Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce went to the podium and said, "We want to welcome all of you to this workshop. As you can see from the agenda, after Mooney Gray speaks we'll break for lunch, then reconvene in smaller groups to brainstorm. Also, as you can see in your packet, we have more than thirty businesses represented, and y'all know that it only takes two companies to get a little networking done, so there's no telling what can happen here. Especially"—the guy held up his hand as if holding a champagne glass shaking with plutonium—"once y'all discover the two complimentary drink tickets stapled to the room-service menu."

Gaston didn't notice how everyone in the audience clapped or hooted. He focused on the podium but peripherally saw the woman's scars. Her nose was in the center space, her eyes the top left and right corners. The woman's mouth took up the entire bottom middle space but spilled over to the lower corners of the game. When Gaston dropped his pen, he pretended that it didn't happen. But the woman bent down, tapped his knee, and said, "Here you go."

"I'm sorry. Thanks. I'm truly sorry."

"My name's Lorene." She swiveled her torso a quarter turn and touched her nametag. Gaston could only look at her face and wonder what had happened. The scars were deep, wide, and only a touch off being purple. It looked to him as though she had been placed belly down on a table saw set to cut grooves a half inch deep. He tried not to think of those old silent movies wherein the hog-tied heroine barely gets saved at the sawmill.

Gaston took off his nametag completely and said, "I work for Salty's Showfish." Then he couldn't get the tag to stick on his shirt again.

Mooney Gray came out wearing a blue suit. He took off his coat. He made a big point of ripping off the necktie, as if he didn't trust it. He ripped off his pinstriped blue dress shirt in a way that made buttons fly off onto people seated in the front row. Mooney Gray now stood before the crowd of salespeople in need of motivation wearing his pants and a T-shirt that—from his right to left—had a picture of Moe Howard's face, the lowercase letter *t* that looked like a cross, and Darth Vader's helmeted head.

Lorene said, "I've seen this guy before. It gets worse."

Gaston didn't hear her. He tried to remember if most children started in a corner box or right in the middle when they played tic-tac-toe.

"I want to start off this morning by telling y'all a little story about two brothers. One was the ultimate optimist, and the other would take bets with complete strangers that the

un wouldn't use the next morning. You know this second old boy, I'm sure. They had the same mother and father, who fed them the same food, and enrolled them in the same schools, and provided for them the best that they could. One turned out eternally optimistic, and the other turned toward pessimism."

Gaston thought, This is easy. Cain and Abel. If he asks us if we know who he's talking about, and if I were the kind of man who yelled out answers, I'd yell out Cain and Abel. Lorene went over with her pound sign face and whispered, "If he asks who he's talking about, don't yell out Cain and Abel."

Gaston nodded. He tried to stick his nametag to his pants leg. He wished that he'd gotten coffee, so that he'd have an excuse to throw away a Styrofoam cup, or get a refill, or feign scalding himself.

Mooney Gray held one hand up to quiet the crowd of salespeople, all ready to yell out Cain and Abel. "One an optimist, and one a pessimist. Well, these old boys liked to go fishing together, you see. The pessimist would just throw his hook in the water without any bait or anything. He'd say to his brother, 'I ain't gone catch nothing noways.' And then he'd stand there on the bank watching his brother bring in fish after fish after his worthy barb, you know. Bream. Shellcrackers. Sunfish. Catfish. Guppies."

Lorene scratched her chin. She said to Gaston, "You're in the fish business. Which one would you hire?"

Gaston said, "Look at my leg," and pulled his pants up to his knee. He showed Lorene a birthmark the size of a small pancake. "Sometimes this itches really bad. I don't know why."

Mooney Gray walked from one side of the foot-high stage to the other. He looked at the ceiling. "The pessimist brother never said a word until, one day, the optimist caught a fish [illegible] half. He pulled and reeled, and pulled some more. He'd snagged a gross carp [illegible] freed itself, causing the hook to fly back out of the water at a speed so fast that even Superman couldn't have detected what flew toward the optimist brother's face. That steel embedding itself into this old boy's right eyeball, and it blinded him completely. Soon thereafter it got a [illegible] these days, buddy.' So the [illegible]

[illegible] Lorene [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Gaston was about to continue his spiel for [illegible] when Mooney Gray interrupted him. Mooney Gray stood and said, "Mr. Gray, this man here didn't have [illegible] you were talking about. He [illegible]." She held her left hand, index finger down toward Gaston's scalp. When [illegible] the seminar-goers turned to look, though they [illegible] Lorene.

Drew Gaston knew the rudiments of a filtration system. He talked to his prospective clients about how fish defecated in their own environment and couldn't live long if no one came around to clean out the tank. That's not what sold his product and services, of course. He had statistics concerning restaurants and bars without aquariums and the same establishments' gross after installing a wall of glass, water, and sea bass. He provided client/customer telephone numbers for people to call in case they didn't believe his claims. More often than not he dealt with ex-surfers, ex-Northerners, ex-husbands. He didn't see many switchblade victims.

He dealt with local oceanfront women who hung out at places like Blowfish Aft up in Murrell's Inlet, sat with elbows propped on a foot-wide bar staring at miniature toy scuba divers, said things like, "I picked out that hammerhead all by myself." He wasn't prepared for the remainder of the world that lived and thrived on dry land.

Mooney Gray stalked what tongue-and-groove boards bent beneath his penny loafers. He jutted his chest and wagged one finger left and right as if to a James Brown song. "You've learned to make eye contact. You've learned to shake hands with a firm grip. You've learned to shake hands and make eye contact before giving your spiel. So what? So what?! I have a dog that shakes hands and [illegible]."

Lorene wore no underwear. Gaston [illegible] and [illegible] beside [illegible]. It was [illegible] the morning yet.

"Listen," Mooney Gray said. "Listen, I got a story for y'all. This'll mean something. This ain't no trick."

Lorene said to Gaston, "He's going to start this whole thing, and then he'll call for a break. Don't get too wrapped up in it."

"What happened?" Gaston asked. He pointed at her face.

"Listen up," Lorene said. She took his hand and set it on her small lap. "Even a man more worried about fish than anything else might want to know what this is all about."

Gaston wasn't sure if he underwent his first petit-mal seizure or what, but his middle finger twitched uncontrollably for the first time ever. It went in X's and O's, as if he were playing tic-tac-toe on Lorene's face. He felt the same warmth on his hand that he might have if petting a black poodle in the sun.

"My daughter joined a gang when she was fifteen years old. We lived in Anaheim, California—you know, right next to Mickey Mouse and Goofy. Gangs don't emerge out of never-never land. That's what me and the missus thought. Well, my daughter didn't take much stock in all that. She joined a gang, and as in all good gangs there was an initiation. She didn't have to go out and kill anybody, thank God. No sir. Don't get me wrong, but sometimes I think what she had to undergo was even worse. She had to self-mutilate herself."

Gaston put his hand back on his own lap. He crossed and recrossed his legs. He pretended to cough.

Mooney Gray shook his head over and over, then turned his back to the audience. "Living so close to Hollywood, these gang members thought that they should scar up their faces as a protest to"—he turned around and made quotation marks in the air—"'the beautiful people.' They got box cutters and sliced open their faces. One girl made an X right across her face. She could've been a model before her decision. One girl made like Frankenstein and just put incisions every whichaway."

Gaston turned toward Lorene. He said, "This is your father?"

Mooney Gray pointed at Lorene and said, "My daughter in the back of the room decided that she wanted to stay young forever, and to do so she needed to slice a children's game on her face."

This was Lorene's cue. She stood up, walked past Gaston, and joined her father onstage. Lorene said, "You would think that I would have no sales ability whatsoever because of my face. Let me tell you that last year I cleared almost a half million. And you know that if I can get clients to buy my product without looking at my face, then you can sell whatever it is you sell."

For the first time in his life Drew Gaston thought about how he wished he'd married a woman who taught first grade. He didn't want to sit around motivational speeches ever again. Somehow he knew that whatever Lorene would say, it would end up with him either buying her product out of pity or feeling a guilt known only to biblical characters.

Mooney Gray said, "We're going to take a break for those of y'all who smoke and/or drink coffee. When we reconvene my daughter will tell you everything she knows about selling audiotapes and braille books to the blind."

Gaston keyed Mooney Gray's Lincoln Continental down the driver's side, from front wheel well to mid back door. He rounded his own car, got in, and drove straight to a place called the Halibut Inn near Neptune Beach, thirty minutes away, where he'd once sold a wall aquarium to a joint that served mostly bikers. The aquarium kept clown fish only, seeing as they held the same colors as the Harley-Davidson logo.

Inside, he ordered a draft and said to the barmaid, "I'm the guy who sold y'all the aquarium." He pointed behind her.

"That's not enough to get drinks on the house." The barmaid had her hair pulled back in a French twist. She wore leggings and a T-shirt that read, IF YOU CAN'T LAUGH AT YOURSELF, THEN MAKE FUN OF EVERYONE ELSE.

"I wasn't looking for free beer. I got money. I was just saying."

She said, "I remember when you came in here a couple years ago."

Gaston said, "I'm Drew Gaston."

They didn't shake hands. This

ker next to him at the Lar[illegible]
Gaston. Cussed on. Sen. Ap[illegible]
me from a people who eat turtle
n. That's how last names come
bout. People named Baker come
om people who ran bread shops
nuths me from horseshoers."

"We don't need no more aquari-
ns," the barmaid said. "I can't say
hat this one does us much good.
he owner's gone crazy and talks to
e fish most nights."

Gaston looked behind the woman
t them hundred-gallon tanks—a
nall one compared with what he'd
ld to places like Dale Ray's Delray
ar and Grill, which only held
ates and mantas, or what the locals
rouped as devilfish. "I been to some
ind of motivational-speaker thing I
ad to go to. I'm not selling today."

Gaston looked at the barmaid's
erfect face and thought. There's
omething missing.

She placed a glass of beer in front
f him. "I've seen those people on TV
hen I get home at three o'clock in
he middle of the night. That what
ou're talking?"

Gaston watched the clown fish,
which seemed to be healthy. "I don't
now what I'm talking," he said. He
ooked at the biker, who wore an up-
side-down tattoo on his left arm that
ead, [illegible]

The biker said, "My daddy was a
motivational speaker of sorts. He ran
the local KKK. Oh, he talked and
talked and talked. Then somebody
shot him in the eye and killed him."

Gaston looked at the barmaid.
Her jaw didn't drop.

"This man I went to see brought
long his goofball daughter—a sick
kick. She had scars from here to
there." Gaston swung his hand like
Zorro across his face. "I don't get
what people talk about anymore,
man. I have no idea what anything
has to do with selling what I have to
sell. I'm thinking about moving to
South Dakota or someplace."

Six clown fish wavered toward
Gaston and the biker in such a way
that made Gaston think about syn-
chronized swimmers. The barmaid
stood before them. She said, "My
best friend in high school got cut up
while diving down in some of those
underground caves over near there."
She pointed west. "She was lucky it
hasn't [illegible]
up on coral or limestone. She got
scraps [illegible]
months [illegible]
skin grafts that didn't quite take."

The biker [illegible]
clown fish, [illegible]
newborn. [illegible]
looked at the [illegible]
dropped his pants. He showed her
the scaly patches of psoriasis on his
upper thighs. "Did it look like this?"
he said. "Look at me. I'm a goddamn
skunk, motherfucker."

The biker left [illegible]
and said he needed to rough up
someone for money. The barmaid
said to Gaston, "Maybe you should
lay off beer and drink pure water on-
ly. I read something about dehydra-
tion one time."

He ordered a bourbon
and water.

Gaston called his voice mail
from the car. His boss had left one
message for him to get in touch with
a woman up in Savannah who owned
a basement bar called Carpal Tunnel,
which was supposed to be geared to-
ward after-five-o'clock secretaries.
"Seeing as 'carp' is part of the name,
Drew, well, you can figure out how to
talk them into an aquarium." Salty
left another message that went, "I
didn't pay all this money for y'all to
get motivated properly only to have
you drive around town listening to
your messages." That was it.

Gaston drove back into Jack-
sonville. He parked at the far end of
Mooney Gray's scarred sedan. Some-
where between the bar and the Rama-
da he decided to ask Lorene out for a
date that night, maybe take her back
to the Halibut Inn. Maybe he'd ask
[illegible]
go there too, seeing as the Brunswick
to–Fort Pierce section of the Atlantic
[illegible]
[illegible]
from beneath some Salty's Showfish
[illegible]
said. "I hope y'all had a good lunch.



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want to tell y'all a little story, seeing

wasn't around, but there was a piece of paper on her seat folded over. She'd took it and read, "I hope you don't think to trick you. After my father got me to the first things I had to learn how to do "sincerely."

long story involving people who die to plan and those who plan to die, pocket. He got up and went to the

"Yes sir. Second floor." The clerk elevator and then a right to the end of the hallway or climb those stairs at the where you want to be. Whichever's easiest."

Gaston found Lorene at the bar, drinking something that involved a paper umbrella. Most of Salty's Showfish sales force sat at a round table at "Mind if I join you here, lady?" he said, pulling a leather-backed stool out.

rally. He wanted to run his hand over her visage, either for security or to make sure Mooney and Lorene hadn't pulled some kind of makeup job to gain sympathy.

"Nothing against you and yours, but I can't take these motivational seminars. The last one I went to involved everybody holding hands and singing, 'If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands,' which wasn't easy, seeing as we were told not to let go of our tender poured a pint and slid it over. From behind him Gaston heard Mike Cobb bragging about an aquarium he sold to Dollywood when he was on his

Lorene tipped her glass in toast. "I didn't travel around with Daddy often. We just happened to be in the same are. He are more than a few blind people in Florida, let me tell you. They want books on tape. They want braille. I know he's my father and all, but let me say that Mooney Gray is a moral person. He's not like us. He genuinely wants people to succeed in what they do, and he believes in what he espouses."

Gaston thought, *espouses*. He would use that word from now on out. "That's a true story about the gang? What were you people thinking?"

Lorene ran her index finger down the alluvial chutes of her face. "I wanted to be queen of the gang, pretty much. Hell, any kind of self-etched disfigurement allowed a girl to join in. Some of my friends only scratched an inch-long crease into their forehead or wherever." She took the umbrella and straw from her drink. Lorene set them aside on a clean paper napkin. She slugged down the mixture like a shooter. "It's not easy living in such close proximity to women who can afford perfection long after their looks decline."

Gaston turned to his friends. Mike Cobb gave a thumbs-up.

Gaston returned to the seminar alone. He got in a group of five other men and a woman. Mooney Gray told them to close their eyes and envision anything that might make the world better that didn't involve money. Mooney Gray said, "You can't think about turning slums into condos, seeing as that would take too much money. You can't think about feeding kids in Rwanda or wherever, seeing as rice, flour, and wheat cost money. You can't even think about cleaning up the environment, seeing as it'd cost money to filter out what toxins we pour into the Mississippi and places."

Gaston closed his eyes and thought of Lorene's scars. He tried not to think, A world without low self-esteem, a world without women who know that they can't compete with what advertisers put in magazines and on television so that said women feel as though they need to lose anywhere from ten to a hundred pounds in order to look like an airbrushed woman midway through a 200-page magazine with ten pages of actual text. He tried not to think, If people still had gills.

"Okay. Now I want everybody to tell their secrets. Y'all vote on which one you think's best in your group, and then I'll vote on which one's best overall. I believe I got another"—Mooney Gray reached into his waistband—"set of complimentary drink tickets for upstairs."

Gaston's group stared at one another. One man said to Gaston, "Well, seeing as you're in the club, why don't you start off."

"I ain't in the club. I don't even know what the club is. I sell fuckin' aquariums."

"I'm in golf balls," another man said.

The woman in the group said, "My boss sent me here because I couldn't talk people into two months' worth of suntan sessions. We live in St. Augustine, by God! Who needs suntan sessions?"

Gaston said, "Eeny-meenie-miney-moe," and went around until it ended with the guy next to him. "You start."

It was worthless. Every salesperson said something that would've cost money—free cars for every American, free groceries, obligatory armed service. One guy said, "To make the world a better place I'm thinking maybe we could all move to space stations and live above it all." He sold air purifiers door-to-door.

Gaston wrote down every suggestion in the lined memo pad provided in each participant's packet. When it got to his turn he said, "The world would be a different and better place without mandatory motivational speeches to attend." His team members stared at him as if he'd piped up about how Jesus was a gay man who couldn't decide which of the twelve disciples to date seriously.

"That's just plain mean-spirited," said a man who sold a cleansing agent called Scour Power. "Go with the flow, man. Do you know how lucky you are to be able to spend a day not knockin' on doors?"

Gaston stood up and looked at Lorene's father onstage. He yelled out, "It would be a better world if we wouldn't have to go to motivational speeches, man. It would be a better world if parents could understand that their children cried out for help in ways unknown to the live-bearing population." It just came to him. He nodded twice hard, turned, and

lked out of the room all lumpy and boneless, as if he were a pimp's costume.

Lorene said, "I'm not digging on your car or anything, but it would be nice to have a convertible right now."

Gaston had gone back up to the Rada bar, taken the scarred woman by the hand, and led her outside. They drove to the Halibut Inn.

"When you first sat down next to me at nine o'clock this morning, did you intentionally show me your crotch?" I want to know. It doesn't matter if you did or didn't. What I'm thinking is, a person with a, well, blemish of some sort might subconsciously redirect another person's line of sight. I'm trying to figure some things out about the human condition."

Lorene adjusted the passenger-side mirror in a way that allowed Gaston to see only the roadside ditch clearly. "We couldn't rob banks when I was in the gang. It was too easy for a witness to give clear descriptions. What we did, though, was hang out down in Beverly Hills and find ways to fuck movie stars. Men or women. I can give you a list of leading men to character actors to sitcom women who will never forget me. I'm etched in their minds, so to speak."

Gaston got behind a slow-moving truck with WORLD'S LARGEST ALLIGATOR printed on the tailgate. He didn't switch lanes and pass it. He said, "What?"

Lorene studied strip malls. She kept her face turned away from Gaston. "Listen. I met a man who opened a New Age bookstore. He had this big gay and lesbian section. He had an entire wall of books on holistic healing and another on how to garden without using any pesticides or insecticides. This was in New Mexico. You'd think that he'd've made a killing. This was in Santa Fe, where all those rich people come buy bad artwork to fill the walls of their new vacation homes up in Taos or wherever."

Gaston wondered if the World's Largest Alligator was in the back of the pickup truck. It was one of those wide-bed trucks with four tires on back. He wanted the alligator—which certainly had to curl itself in half if it was the world's largest—to raise its head.

"He [illegible] Lorene. "Look, I'm not making this up. He [illegible] that's bad feng shui. He won't be able to espouse his mind anymore."

Lorene said something about how [illegible] what she had to say. "My father never [illegible]

[illegible] a local talk show [illegible]

some kind of avant-garde note [illegible] er teenage [illegible]

[illegible] from past lives and whatnot. In the Philosophy section [illegible] from Plato to Sheldon Mac[illegible]

The World's Largest Alligator turned off Highway 10 toward the Regency Square Mall. Gaston followed it. "I want to see this thing," he said. The truck pulled into [illegible]

"Well, the [illegible] bookstore went out of business completely. As a matter of fact, he didn't average selling more than a book a day over a six-month period."

Gaston put his car in park. The driver of the pickup truck pulled to the pumps and got out. Gaston yelled out, "You got the World's Largest Alligator in back?"

Lorene pulled Gaston by the arm. She said, "I have important things. You need to listen to what I have to say."

The guy pumping gas said, "I *did*. You ain't seen her, have you?"

Lorene pulled [illegible] said, "Goddamn. I wonder if that thing escaped."

"It ended up that this man with the bookstore had all of his tropical birds in the wrong spot. He had them on the wrong corner of the room, and pointed in the wrong direction. Faced the wrong way."

Gaston [illegible] Lorene continued, unmindful of what her tears would do should she cry. She needed a gutter hanging [illegible] her chin, no daylight.

"She's loose! Wait a minute. You lost the World's Largest Alligator?"

He stared straight ahead. "That guy lost the World's Largest Alligator." He put [illegible] that's bad feng shui. He won't be able to espouse his mind anymore."

Lorene said something about how [illegible] what she had to say. "My father never [illegible]

[illegible] a local talk show [illegible]

■

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"Serbs, having thrown off their dictator, were waiting, in the dark, for international aid to help them pay for electricity. California was running low on power again. Maine's wild Atlantic salmon were placed on the endangered species list, to the dismay of Maine's Atlantic salmon fishermen. Boston banned mercury thermometers, of the toxin, enough to contaminate a small lake. Russia decided to go ahead and crash the space station Mir into the Pacific Ocean, disappointing Dennis Tito, an hoped to pay $20 million to visit the doomed station, and television executives, who were planning to program there. China banned a gathering of poets. A robot successfully read the mind of a monkey."

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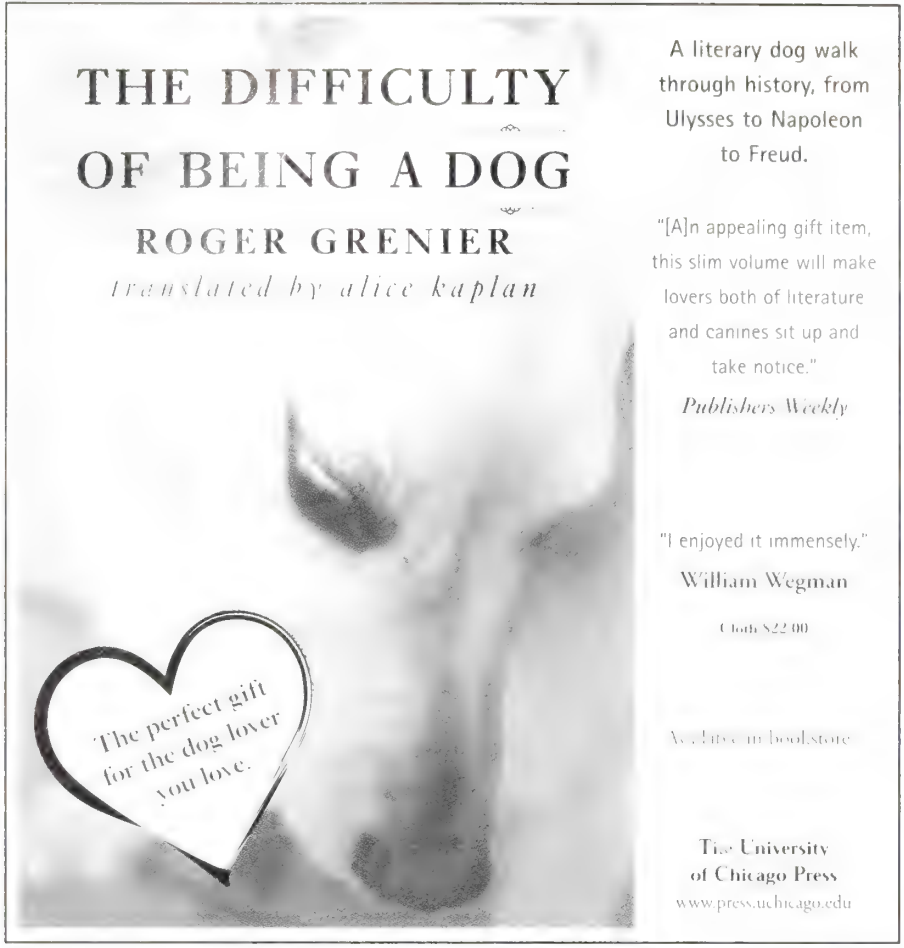
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SOLUTION TO THE JANUARY PUZZLE

Q	U	I	C	K	C	A	C	A	D	E	M	I	A	
U	M	C	L	I	O	F	H	P	E	N	A	N	G	
E	B	B	E	T	S	F	I	E	L	D	R	M	I	
E	R	R	O	R	M	A	N	H	A	T	T	A	N	
N	E	O	P	H	O	B	E	T	Y	P	I	N	G	
S	L	O	A	M	P	L	E	B	R	O	N	X	S	
I	L	K	T	R	O	Y	X	U	S	C	I	O	N	
L	A	L	R	B	L	V	I	C	T	O	R	I	A	
L	O	Y	A	L	I	S	T	K	S	N	T	N	V	
T	E	N	T	A	T	I	V	E	H	O	O	K	Y	
I	R	R	I	T	A	N	T	R	I	D	L	E	Y	
M	U	S	T	A	N	G	S	S	L	O	E	D	A	
E	G	R	A	N	T	E	R	E	O	R	D	E	R	
D	A	U	N	T	S	R	I	C	H	M	O	N	D	

THEME ANSWERS EXPLANATIONS

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 1. two rngs.; 6. a-C-A-; 12. C H E; 15. Pentateuch; 19. (t)error; 19. ne(Pooh')bc*; 20. two rngs.; 22. *; 25. (s)ilk; 26. (des)Troy; 27. *; 32. , 36. , 38. Hook-v? (pun); 39. , 45. two rngs.; 46. re(or)der*; 47. *

DOWN: 2. *; 4. K-I-t; 6. a-FF-ably; 8. de-lay; 9. hidden; 11. (p)agings; 16. man-X; 21. poco-no(te); 23. ex-it; 25. *; 28. O.(mk)E.D.; 30. BL(at-an)T; 33. pun, singe; 34. by low, homophone; 35. *; 37. tit-a-n; 40. rug-a; 44. (O)sri(c).

Space considerations prevent m from responding to all the charges but:

1) Millard Farmer is indeed "renowned" death-penalty attorney. I is true that Farmer's relationship wit the SPLC ended when they sued him but Levin omits that Farmer counter sued and won a $50,000 settlement.

2) Levin says I criticized the Cente for "building an endowment." No, criticized it for building a treasur bulging with $120 million, for cryin poverty in order to raise even large sums, for flagrantly lying about its in tentions to stop raising money at specified financial goal that was in stantly jacked higher when reached and for spending a tiny amount of it vast reserves on protecting and de fending civil rights.

3) As to the question of stamps (an here I am reading from the SPLC' Statement of Functional Expenses f Fiscal Year 1999, as submitted to the In ternal Revenue Service), the larges single category of the $10.8 million spent on educational programs wa postage, $2,391,939. (I concede that rounded the amount up by $8,061.)

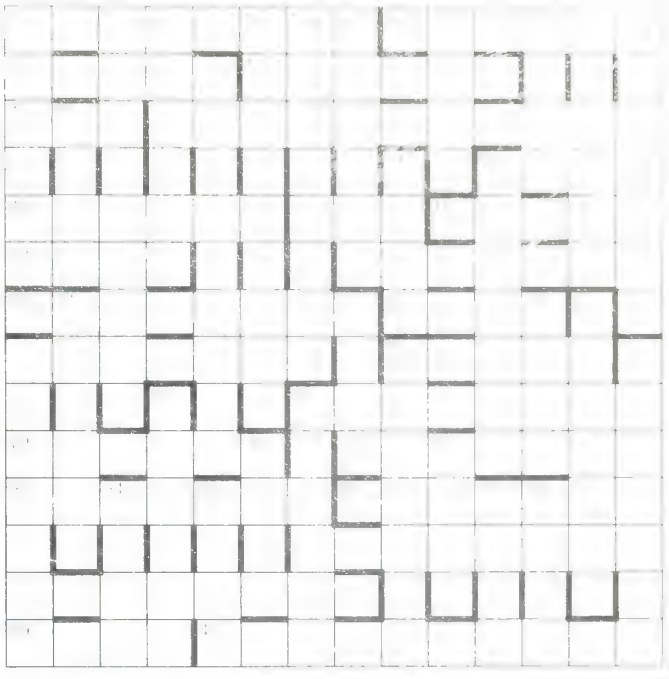
4) It's true that the 1996 article wrote for *CounterPunch* made some the same points as the *Harper's* story So what? I fully expect to write an other article on Dees five years dow the road. If the SPLC's treasure ches grows at the same rate it did betwee my *CounterPunch* and *Harper's* piece by then Dees and his cronies will b sitting atop $250 million (and n doubt still sending out fund-raisin letters that promise—really, truly— to stop passing around the beggin bowl just as soon as they have $50 million).

Correction

The November Index stated tha the estimated number of hours of la bor performed by African-Americ slaves between 1619 and 1865 wa 222,505,049; the statistic appears i Clarence J. Munford's book *Race an Reparations*. A far more accurate est mate would have been 355 billion according to Stanley Engerman of th University of Rochester. We regre the error.

On Air

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.



The twelve unclued entries in the diagram are related in a certain way, though the six entered across and the six entered down are different.

Clued answers include five proper names and one foreign word; there are no uncommon words, but 31A and 38D are alternate spellings. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 90.

Across

7. Airport worker, having yen, prepares to travel back (6)
10. A guy who gets ten cents on the dollar? (5)
11. "Vacillate" spelled with two T's? Not quite right! (6)
12. Eruption caused by the Twenty-sixth Article (3)
15. Some Viennese ultimately solo in Paris (4)
16. Eddies, Susans, Williams, Irenes, and Robert Lewis Stevenson, naturally (6)
17. Grass produces endless obscenity (3)
18. A long time ago, anybody could spell "woosh" (3)
19. Somewhat mannered novelist (4)
20. Her bite's involved in getting pulled? (8)
23. Down-to-earth dilute's worth with women's clothes (4)
26. Male with song for a female (5)
28. Dance for your old love, Servetus! (8)
29. It may has been passed around, passion (6)
31. Seriously establish potential cunning (7)
33. It's, like, radical in a family (7)
36. After a couple of pints, rides alien port engine (7)
39. Not that noted ly well (4)
40. Recovered from test, tumorless recommended (6)

Down

1. Not quite full-size perch is not like us, for species membership (6)
2. Cubes about Inuit scattered about Europe's floor (6)
3. Infinite I choose with [illegible] (6)
4. Rat widow's [illegible] (6)
5. A [illegible] ner," perhaps? (8)
6. Money [illegible] (6)
8. Drink [illegible] excellent (4)
9. A real cuckoo, [illegible] (6)
13. Ten with a one in fifty (4)
14. U [illegible] (4)
21. Little M[illegible] (10)
22. Strat[illegible] (6)
24. [illegible] (4)
25. [illegible] (6)
26. [illegible] (6)
27. W[illegible] (5)
28. Toy wall [illegible] (5)
30. [illegible] (4)
32. [illegible] (4)
34. [illegible] and for sure, kid [illegible] self (4)
37. [illegible] boat's boom (4)
38. [illegible] (4)

Contest Rules: [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
April issue. Winners in the [illegible]
[illegible]

IMPERFECT UNIONS

Democracy, like capitalism, is among America's most widely and clumsily exported intellectual properties. Long before the U.S. electorate stepped innocently into the voting booth last November, more than a third of the world's countries had already experienced their own recent polling fiascoes, many of them bloody. Although there now exist a record number of self-styled democracies, the term remains notoriously malleable, far easier to claim than to deserve. Half of the most recent popular national elections in 163 countries were marred by violence; a fifth were contentious or sloppy enough to delay or cast doubt on the legitimacy of the outcome; and in at least twenty elections some opposition parties did not participate at all. Many winning candidates formerly held office through coups or Soviet-era assignment, and a number of their elections, not surprisingly, ran smoothly. By far the best predictor of election strife is recent decolonization, an experience—along with colonization itself—that usually leaves countries so drained and destabilized that Western political expectations seem ironic at best. In the handful of fledgling African democracies that are engaged in civil war, such expectations seem beside the point. And this year, as the United States settles for a court-appointed president, the West might do well to reserve its expectations for itself.





Eastern Europe has embraced various levels of democracy, as have the Balkans. Former Soviet republics in the east, however, have been less receptive.

Cambodia is among several internationally recognized democracies whose long-standing leadership is repressive enough to render recent elections nominal at best.



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HARPER'S



SOUND AND FURY

The Politics of Noise in a Loud Society

By Garret Keizer

THE CASE AGAINST HENRY KISSINGER

Part II: Crimes Against Humanity

By Christopher Hitchens

SEIZE THE DAY JOB

Sacrificing Saul Bellow on the Altar of One's Own Career

By Lee Siegel

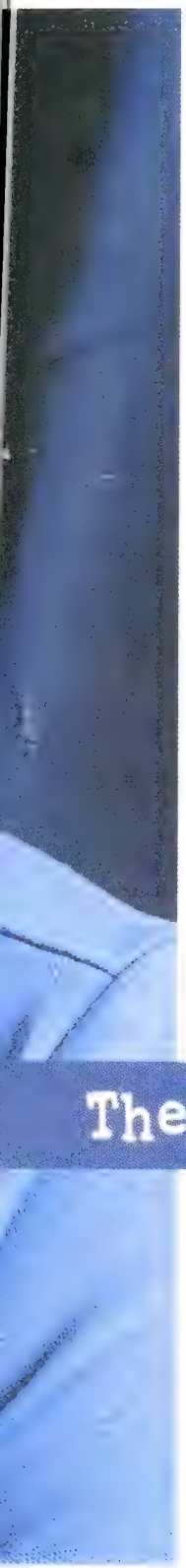
SHE

A story by Jason Brown

Also: Marcel Proust and Les Murray

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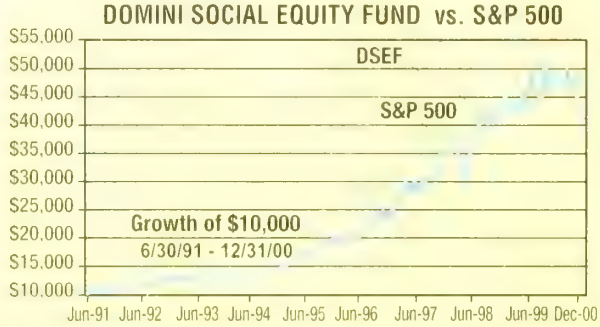
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KISSINGER: THE ART OF THE DEAL

LETTERS

Perish or Publish

I read with interest Tom Bissell [illegible] an Xlibris advertisement ["All Is [illegible] thought I would respond from Xlibris's point of view.

We [illegible] industry, and we especially thank you for reproducing our ad as the centerpiece of the article.

Bissell and Younce correctly point out that an explosion in content (i.e., more titles) will likely re[illegible] writers have through Xlibris. Although [illegible] one knows the answer to whether this explosion in content is "good" or "bad" in general, Xlibris was founded for the purpose of unleash[illegible] D. T. Max, "an outburst of self-expression unparalleled in our country's literary history." We believe that everyone has a story to tell and that these stories should be preserved to add to the richness of humanity. Firsthand accounts of significant human experiences such as the Holocaust and World War II should not be rejected simply because they are not written in polished prose. Rather, they are full of authentic feeling and detail that should be captured in an enduring format, such as a book. Fortunately, technology now enables this; Xlibris makes the technology accessible.

Let me point out that Xlibris is not for "vanity-press spawn" only, as Bissell and Younce disparagingly call our writers. Out-of-print authors also have come to us, and we are happy to help them get their work—which the traditional publishing industry [illegible] back into circulation.

Bissell and Younce raise the issue of whether more content is good for the publishing industry. This is not a concern we dwell on. We are focused on writers and only writers, many of whom feel underserved by the industry. No one at Xlibris considers the traditional publishing industry to be "corrupt," as is implied in the article. Rather, it is an entirely different business than ours. They are focused on divining the desires of readers and finding content to fill that need. We are focused on what writers want to write, and we are content to allow the writers to determine their own markets.

[illegible]
Chief Marketing Officer
Xlibris Corporation
Philadelphia

Whatever Tom Bissell and Webster Younce think of Xlibris's advertising strategies, printing services such as Xlibris and iUniverse are making it possible for writers who have appeared widely in literary journals but who are deemed "uncommercial" by mainstream houses

yes, including me) to make their ork available to a worldwide audi- ce instead of having it disappear to a drawer. Vanity presses of old harged huge fees and left writers th hundreds of unsold books. But th these new companies, costs are inimal to nonexistent.

Who, one might ask, will actual- buy such books? Well, if ten eople purchase mine, I will con- der it a success. After all, that's n more readers than the main- ream publishing world has ever llowed me.

Christopher Conlon
Olney, Md.

As a board member of America's argest organization of independent ublishers, I took Bissell and ounce's attack on Xlibris with a grain of salt. True enough, many tarry-eyed would-be authors may ritter away some hard-earned hekels on their singularly unim- pressive titles, knowing nothing of he book market's mechanics, but is selling a digital crypt somewhere in cyberspace as criminal as killing a tree for a garage worth of un- sellable hard copies? Some people may take their $300 book and learn from it, love it, and move a notch in the right direction. In a nation where everything takes on the val- ue of its advertised image, we all need to be careful of being sold our fantasy, but removing the money barrier to publishing—Xlibris's real premise—will give people a chance to say something without the in- dustry's input.

Sheldon Norberg
North Mountain Publishing
San Francisco

Younce and Bissell are correct when they point out that having a book published by Xlibris is not the same as having a book published by a traditional publisher. I can attest to the vast difference between the two, as I am in the unique position of simultaneously having one book published by a New York publisher and another by Xlibris. But so long as you don't expect the same sort of

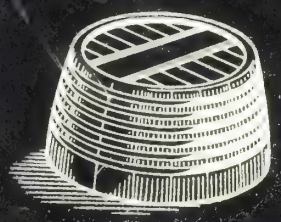
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There is only one serious danger in print-on-demand publishing: authors who believe their novel is finished before it really is will, out of impatience for literary glory, publish their book with Xlibris and the like. What if upon receiving the first rejection from his publisher, Charles Scribner's Sons, for his novel *This Side of Paradise*—a young F. Scott Fitzgerald, desperate for publication, sent his book to Xlibris rather than holing up in his parents' attic to revise?

Jane Clark
Brooklyn

A Once and Future Dystopia

In his reexamination of Edward Bellamy's utopian novel, *Looking Backward*, published in 1888 ["A Brave Old World," December 2000], Russell Jacoby fails to recognize the insidious thread common to virtually any utopian design: the singularity of the vision. The masses are to submit calmly to the brilliant top-down planning, and a superior society will ensue. If the results are invariably disastrous, it is for the simple reason that the dynamic needs and wants of the individual cannot be anticipated by the static design of the one-size-fits-all vision. Since the vision does not change from its inception, the situation inevitably worsens with time. In short, the good intentions of the visionaries are always undone by the inherent elitism of the quest.

Although Jacoby attempts to represent criticisms of utopian ideals, it is quite clear that he has little patience for those who espouse such views. He observes that "today few imagine that society can be fundamentally improved," as if suggesting that the *only* road to a better society runs through centrally planned, utopian landscapes. He warns that "we no longer entertain serious alternatives to the prevailing consumerist society" and opines that "a cheap understanding of history . . . has allowed us to adopt a convenient cynicism, a feeling that the best we can do is to feather our nests."

Although it is easy to arouse suspicions of the sterile-sounding "consumerist society," it is not so easy to disparage a society of people acting freely through uncontrolled, voluntary arrangements. Yet these two depictions define the same reality. With the phrase "feather our nests," Jacoby suggests that those who side with freedom, and free markets, are inherently crude and selfish. But in the end, who is more selfish: the individual who makes decisions about his or her own "nest" or the individual who makes those decisions on behalf of others?

If the utopian spirit is almost universally derided these days, it is not, as Jacoby writes, because we are "narrower" than we used to be. Rather, we are less pompous.

David Allison
Cincinnati

Russell Jacoby's lament for the passing of the utopian impulse of the nineteenth century seems misplaced. The nineteenth century was no more "benighted" than our own age is "dazzling." The problem, as Jacoby must be aware, is not that we lack a utopian impulse but that we cannot agree on how to get from Here to Utopia. (The late Ayatollah Khomeini, for example, wanted a more Shiite Muslim world.)

The twentieth century taught us the futility, and the peril, of attempting to restructure society—however just it may seem—according to some utopian concept. Perhaps that is why we have lost the utopian impulse of the nineteenth. If so, there has been progress, not cause for regret.

Roy Piperberg
John Abbott College
Montreal, Que.

All the Cards on the Table

I thought that your magazine was my favorite because of its smart lefty politics, its offerings of beautiful word dishes, its irony that shields passion and anger, and its selection of brilliant stars like Barbara Ehrenreich. Liking your magazine reinforced the image I had of myself as a cultured political sophisticate.

Then I read James McManus's report on playing in the World Series of Poker ["Fortune's Smile," December 2000], and I knew it was all a lie. I'm a poker player before all else.

McManus's piece sucked me in and kept me wired and sweating. Every hand breathed, every moment screamed, every win was ecstatic, every loss eschatological. It was beautiful. And it went on and on, and I hated when it was over.

Carl Skutsch
New York City

Corporate Profits

Never has one of your articles been so maddening for me to read. The Map on how donated organs are used ["Choice Cuts," December 2000] should have been an article with three or four pages devoted to the statistics alone. When a topic as serious as profiting from body parts of human beings is left to one page filled with graphs, it makes me wonder if *Harper's* is borrowing a few eye-catching tips from *USA Today*. Opening a Pandora's box is a position of responsibility. Continue the discussion.

Ivan Charles Ames
Portland, Ore.

Thanks, *Harper's*, for doing your part to stem the tide of organ donations. Patients waiting for life-saving kidney and liver transplants will surely be grateful for your public service. By resisting the bogus altruism of possibly saving other people's lives, sight, and quality of life, nondonors can ensure that their dead bodies will be used for the purpose God intended: rotting underground. Better to let others die than risk playing a part in cosmetic surgery.

If less than a third of donated organs are given to save lives, that still adds up to thousands. Yours is the

ded logic of Naderism: if it ain't fixed, break it.

Thomas Talbot
New York City

Gene Therapy

Arthur B. Cody's musings on the genome ["Messages from the Genome," Readings, December 2000] were less a consideration of biology than a lament for human ignorance. "Nobody knows how the genome works! he cries repeatedly. Nobody! In the midst of much evangelical hand-waving, Cody points out that scientists and science writers have oversimplified the mechanisms by which sequences of nucleotides produce living organisms. But, in fact, it is unimportant that we are ignorant of the details of the mechanism, or even lack a theory. Science has never claimed to know everything and is always a work in progress, open to disproof or further elaboration as more evidence comes along. Witness Alfred Wegener's proposal of continental drift in 1912, based on geological and biological evidence but quite unsupported by any knowledge or theory of a mechanism. The unexpected revelations of plate tectonics came decades later. In Wegener's time, "everything truly essential about the process [was] utterly and even radically incomprehensible"—words Cody uses to describe our present state of knowledge regarding the genome.

Cody also points out that genetic engineering is "inherently dangerous." The danger, he claims, stems from our ignorance. He argues that we should not alter genes until we completely understand how they work. This is no more than fear of the unknown disguised as logic. His argument fails by its corollary that understanding will in itself ensure a safer course. See, for example, the fact that the United States stands against world scientific opinion in its determination to carry on business as usual despite very solid evidence of the dangers already accruing from fossil-fuel combustion. No safer route is being taken because of solid information.

Eric Grace
Victoria, B.C.



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BOOKS

FICTION

Ofay, 1966

The Boots of the Virgin, 1968

Under the Fifth Sun: A Novel of Pancho Villa, 1980

In the Yucatán, 2000

NONFICTION

The Death of the Great Spirit: An Elegy for the American Indian, 1971

The Oppressed Middle: Politics of Middle Management, 1981

Jews Without Mercy: A Lament, 1982

While Someone Else Is Eating, 1984 (Editor)

Power Sits at Another Table, 1987

Latinos: A Biography of the People, 1992

A Nation of Salesmen: The Tyranny of the Market and the Subversion of Culture, 1994

New American Blues: A Journey Through Poverty to Democracy, 1997 (reprinted as *Riches for the Poor: The Clemente Course in the Humanities*)

In the Language of Kings: An Anthology of Mesoamerican Literature, Pre-Columbian to the Present, May 2001 (Co-Editor, with Miguel León-Portilla)

ARTICLES IN HARPER'S MAGAZINE

"Gabriel Garcia Marquez: The Alchemy of History," *February 1972*

"The Well-Spoken Passions of William H. Gass," *May 1972*

"Literary Life Among the Dinka," *August 1972*

"New Philistines, True Conservatives," *December 1972*

"Donald Barthelme's Illustrated Wordy-Gurdy," *January 1973*

"The Worldy Palimpsest of Thomas Pynchon," *June 1973*

"In Defense of the Children of Cain," *August 1973*

"The Circle of Revolution: Seven Letters from the Land and Life of Pancho Villa," *December 1973*

"Gilmore's Victory: A Murderer Succeeds in Making the State an Accomplice to His Suicide," *April 1977*

"Cutting Velvet at the *New York Times*: The Degeneration of the Newspaper of Record," *October 1977*

"Spanish Harlem: Dreams That Money Can't Buy," *June 1978*

"In Praise of Sheer Nonsense," *August 1978*

"Market Democracy: The World According to Gallup," *November 1978*

"An Eye for an Eye: Reflections on Equality," *May 1979*

"Scenes from Corporate Life: In and Out of the Office," *March 1980*

"The Hollywood Right: Outtakes from the Republican National Convention," *September 1980*

"Dividends: Little Man, What Now?" *March 1981*

"Reflections on Power: A Dissenting View," *July 1985*

"Borderline Cases: The Violent Passage Across the Rio Grande," *August 1990*

"A Nation of Salesmen: Cautionary Tales from the Life of *Homo Vendens*," *October 1994*

"Our Next Race Question: The Uneasiness Between Blacks and Latinos," *April 1996*

"On the Uses of a Liberal Education: As a Weapon in the Hands of the Restless Poor," *September 1997*

"The Last Word: Can the World's Small Languages Be Saved?" *August 2000*

gross exaggeration, then one may merely reflect on how poorly humans understand and interact with their environment, let alone one another.

Jan C. Shiesto
St. Cloud, Minn.

Burned by the Sun

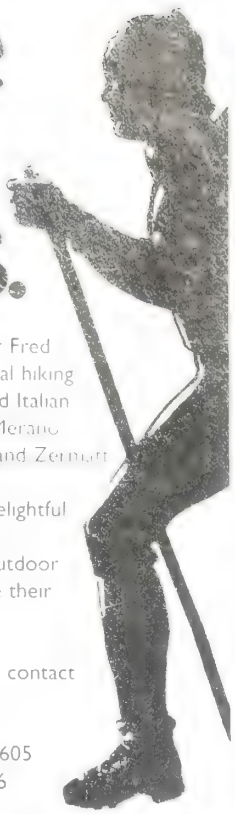
Only one thing is worse than humorless pedantry regarding the *Harper's* Index: incorrect humorless pedantry. Trevor Hancock's letter ["Flying Too High," Letters, January] unfortunately falls into the latter category. The October Index line that Hancock's letter attempts to correct states that on average the Concorde flew 4.7 miles closer to the sun than did other passenger planes. His letter points out that the statistic should have taken into account the time of day: for the Index line to be correct, Hancock says, the planes had to be above the spot on Earth closest to the sun—or at a location where it was noon. But in none of the places where the Concorde flew its commercial runs was the sun ever directly overhead even at noon. Thus, one cannot determine how much closer to the sun the Concorde flew solely by measuring how much higher it was above other planes; season and latitude must be factored in. For example, suppose that at midday local time on the autumnal equinox the Concorde passed over a place at 60 degrees north latitude at a height of 10 miles above the surface of Earth, and at the same moment another plane was flying over the same spot but only 5 miles above the surface. A simple trigonometric calculation will show that the Concorde was about 2.5 miles closer to the sun—it would be 5 miles closer only if the two planes were flying along the equator.

Alan Richardson
Vancouver, B.C.

Corrections

Three statistics in the December 2000 Harper's Index were incorrect. The second line should have read: "Percentage change in the annual

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Conventional wisdom

By Lewis H. Lapham

January 20, 2001

Yale University
Department of History
Professor Walter Trumbull
320 York Street
New Haven, Connecticut 06520

Dear Walter,

I never like to get in the way of your enthusiasms, and I have no quarrel with your demand for a constitutional convention. You write, as always, in the voice of the eighteenth century, and your letters are a joy to read. I especially admired your reference to last year's presidential campaign as "an enfeebled dithering of opinion polls," both candidates "borne aloft on great billows of empty oratory." With respect to the voting in Florida, I can't argue with your disgust. As you say, a "travesty and an outrage," possibly also "a shameless theft"; in any event a poor lesson to set before the nation's schoolchildren as well as our enemies abroad, undoubtedly an encouragement to common pickpockets and apprentice tyrants.

You have a way with words, Walter, and I'm sure the country would profit from a government more responsive to the will of the people. I see no reason why we should not begin again with clean pieces of paper—perhaps even goose-quill pens—disband the Electoral College, bring the length of the primary campaigning season somewhat closer to the term of the trout season in Montana, augment the Bill of Rights, require the candidates for the Senate to pass some kind of intelligence examination, replace the office of the presidency with an Executive Council similar to the one proposed by Benjamin Franklin.

All good points, Walter, well and truly taken, but you say nothing about television and less about the valet parking. Nor do you take account of the product endorsements and the towel service. Little things, all of them tiresome and none of them as important as the question of states' rights, but they add up, the little things, and pretty soon, always when you least expect it, there they are, standing between you and the truth.

I know that you regard the television screen with loathing and contempt, but how else, or where else, do you "bestow upon the American people the long-deferred inheritance of their democratic birthright"? The Internet won't do it. Who would read, much less ratify, a Constitution composed by elflike nerds? The document requires approval by both houses of Congress and thirty-eight state legislatures, and the interested parties would think they were looking at a printout submitted by the Unabomber.

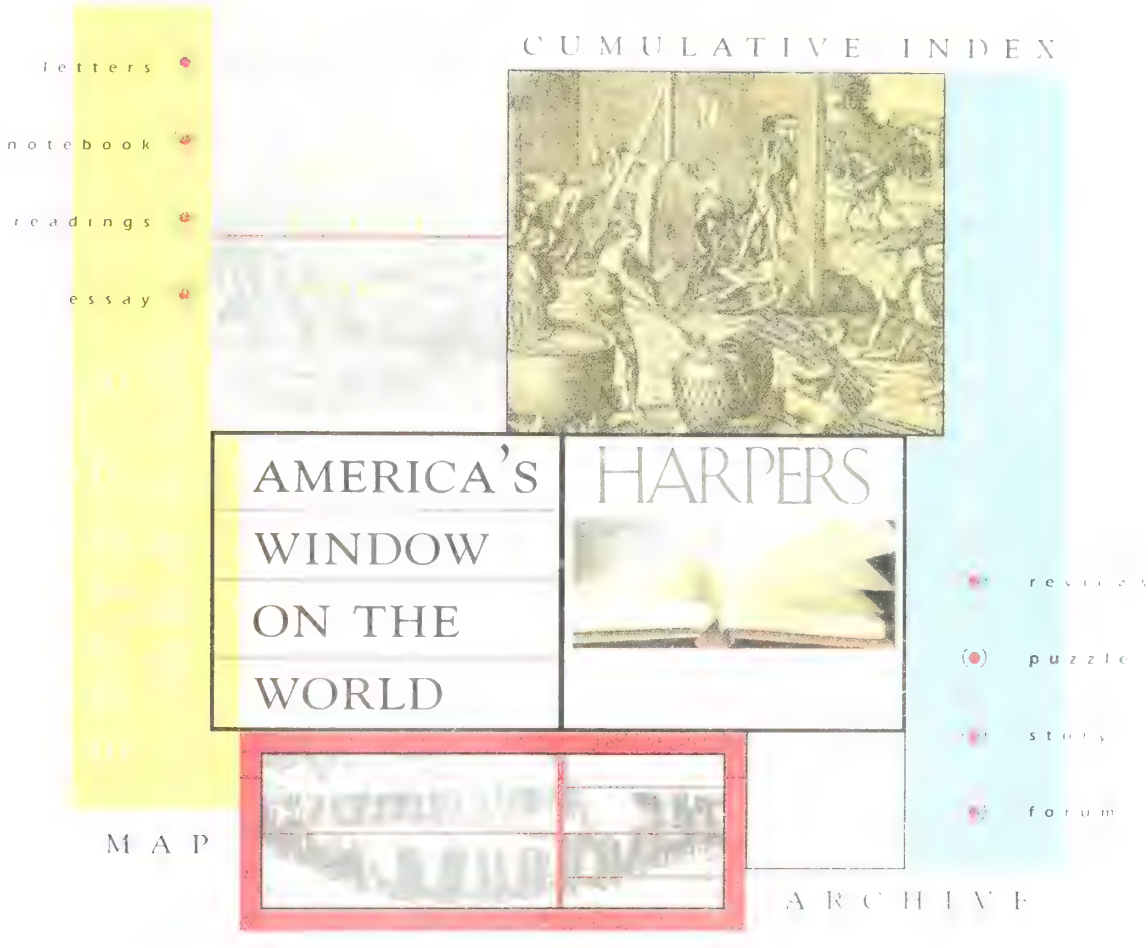
You will remember that Arianna Huffington staged what she billed as "Shadow Conventions" last summer in both Philadelphia and Los Angeles; presumably you also will remember that they were seen as marginal entertainments. The major media didn't show up. Instead of Dan Rather and the editor of *Le Monde*, we had a collection of guitar players, three correspondents from *The Nation*, four friends of Ralph Nader, several delegates from the Seattle street protests (two of them dressed as endangered sea turtles), a lot of speeches (impassioned but familiar) about the mindless and uncaring greed of the New York banks. You would have endorsed every declaration of democratic principle, but if I read your letter correctly you have a more ambitious project in mind, "something serious and genuinely revolutionary," and for that kind of program we need a serious and genuinely revolutionary sum of money.

The managers of last year's presidential campaigns weren't attempting anything brilliant—just trying to get by as cheaply as possible with an old script, two candidates without much draw at the box office, three harmless debates, and a $750 million production budget well below the price of a second-rate record company or a losing football team. You're talking about a major motion picture—a thousand delegates, the convention in session for at least a year, inspirational rhetoric, a born-again America. I know that these are dark days in the life of the republic, Walter, and I don't disagree that dark days call for strong measures.

Not for a moment do I disparage your purpose or doubt your intent, but if what we have in mind is "a citizens' initiative," I don't think we can ask for federal money. Entirely the wrong impression, Walter. We mean to promote our delegates as the philosophical heirs and democratic assigns of Jefferson's independent yeoman, and we don't want to look like beggars dancing for government dimes. Even if we obtained a grant from the Library of Congress or the National Endowment for the Humanities, the level of funding wouldn't pay for the construction of Ted Koppel's skybox.

Nor can we appeal to one or more of the nonprofit organizations concerned with the questions of good government—Common Cause, The Pew Charitable Trusts, the American En-

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terprise Institute, etc., etc. We would find ourselves too easily identified with somebody else's political dreams. We take money from The Heritage Foundation, and the *New York Times* accuses us with the mud of right-wing extremism; accept a contribution from the Sierra Club, and the *Wall Street Journal* consigns us to the scrap heap of the intellectual left.

Which, I understand, you don't want to hear me say this, Walter—brings us to the corporations. I know your feelings on the subject, I've heard you talk about the "fetid breath of corporate hegemony," but who else has the money? Who else bears the brand-name images of America's long-abiding friends? Try to ignore—just for the moment and in the interest of the greater cause—the bad news in the small print about monopoly, price-fixing, "disappeared" middle management, outright fraud, assembly-line workers both maimed and dead. Reconstitute the form of government, and you'll have time enough to revisit the subtexts. But first things first, and for the time being we're discussing hotel suites, shuttle buses, registration desks, where to rent the chairs. The corporations spent $1.3 billion sponsoring last year's Olympic Games, and they worry about the continuing failure of the country's schools. Persuade Intel and IBM that a constitutional convention is a massive public-works project, like Hoover Dam or the building of the atom bomb, and then you can begin to think about delegates and possible topics of debate.

You say you want everybody present to know the difference between a property and a civil right, to come prepared to speak intelligently on issues both foreign and domestic, to refer with ease to *The Federalist* papers as well as to the collected works of James Madison. I take your point, Walter, but I think you set the bar a trifle high. It's conceivable that you could get the prospective delegates to pass a short quiz (one page, twenty questions, true-false) touching on a few of the more prominent events in the nation's history (who won the Civil War, where Bunker Hill is, what happened at Wounded Knee), but how can you not make concessions to celebrity?

The network audience wants to see people who count for something in the world, persons comparable in wealth and social rank to the original authors of the Constitution in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787. As you well know, Walter, they were gentlemen whose names preceded them with the glow of privilege and the weight of authority. I've read your monographs on Charles Pinckney and Gouverneur Morris, both of them figures equivalent in stature to our own Bill Gates, Oprah Winfrey, Ted Turner, Martha Stewart. Why, then, do you choose to forget the country's roots in oligarchy?

Except for a C-Span audience in a Minneapolis bookstore, who wants to listen to debate on the topic of proportional representation? The question enlivened the conversation in 1787 because the eighteenth-century colonies were synonymous with specific concentrations of wealth—merchant shipping in the North, tobacco plantations in the South. But now that wealth has slipped its ties to place, why pretend otherwise? As you say, it no longer takes four days to go by coach from Boston to New York, and if you intend a new Constitution to reflect the twenty-first-century reality, why balk at acknowledging George Steinbrenner and Donald Trump as our own abridged editions of Roger Sherman and Rufus King?

Select the delegates by virtue of their approval ratings in *Forbes* or *Fortune* magazine, not for reasons having to do with the accidents of geography. If you wish to assemble a company of the elect, allot four places (two men, two women) to each of the country's 200 richest commercial interests (the banks, the news and entertainment media, grain and retail merchants, etc.) and the same number in the same proportion to the leading noncommercial enterprises (universities, hospitals, churches, charitable foundations, etc.). It doesn't matter whether everybody brings something to say. George Washington attended every session in Philadelphia, and not once in four months did he speak a single word to any point in any of the debates. The embodiment of gravitas, very dignified, a presence as reassuring as a marble bust of Cicero. You can depend upon performances equally impressive from both Charlton Heston and Justice Clarence Thomas.

You suggest putting the convention out to bid among the nation's historically important cities, possibly also to Las Vegas or Colonial Williamsburg. Again I take your point (venerable architecture, postcard monuments), but again I think that we'd be making a mistake. Remember that you're condemning 1,000 delegates to sit in meetings for the better part of a year. Leave them too long in any one city, and the convention takes on the character of a regional sales promotion. The television audience grows bored with the sight of overly familiar palm trees, the same batteries of revolutionary cannon, yet another cable car clanging toward the wonder of San Francisco Bay.

The eighteenth-century authors of the Constitution managed to get through the work in four months because they were keenly interested in politics, not easily distracted, accustomed to the habits of hard and sustained study. Not our kind of landed plutocracy, Walter. Our people don't like to read books, and their attention spans bear comparison to the life expectancies of moths. We'd begin to lose them in the strip clubs, and the next thing you know the convention becomes the butt of an evening's jokes on Letterman or Leno.

We're better off with a road show set up along the lines of a professional golf tour. The corporations understand the format, know and love the game, and the tournaments invariably bring with them the prospect of sudden fortune somewhere on a sunny fairway or a gently contoured green. Let the convention move its venue every week—under canvas at a fairground near St. Louis, to the civic auditorium in Wichita or the racetrack in Fort Worth—and it comes to town with the promise of a traveling circus. Technicians setting up hospitality tents and television towers, blimps drifting in the sky, limousines bearing the gifts of Hollywood celebrity. If we can impart to the convention something of the same excitement, we achieve an atmosphere of great good feeling and a sense of a work importantly in progress. Every week a new and heartwarming view of America the Beautiful—wonderful

hotographs of the Arizona desert, the Colorado mountains, the sea at Monterey—and none of the participants in town long enough to attract the notice of the tabloids or the police.

Given the drift and bias of the notes so far in hand, Walter, I'm beginning to suspect that a constitutional convention isn't as good an idea as it seemed when I first read your letter. I think I understand what you mean by a popular assembly, but I'm afraid that you have in mind a symposium attended by the faculty at Yale. That's not the crowd apt to be standing around with the big money on the first tee at Pebble Beach. Set up the procedure for designing a new and improved government, and we're likely to lose the few liberties we still retain. You're familiar with the moral jingoism of Robert Bork; you know that the country's major corporations routinely screen job applicants for impurities in their urine and their speech. Present such people with the chance to play the part of philosopher kings, and we can expect the right to stand for public office awarded only to those citizens whose incomes exceed $500,000 a year, and the residents of large cities reduced, as were the South's plantation slaves, to the measure of three fifths of a person and a vote.

Probably we should be glad that the gentlemen who wrote the Constitution were as suspicious of efficient government as they were wary of the "turbulence and folly" that they associated with the theory and practice of democracy. By containing the powers of government in a mechanism as finely balanced as a late-eighteenth-century ornamental clock, they distributed political energy among so many weights and counterweights that nobody could say for certain how the movement originated or where sovereignty was to be found. Why give the friends of John Ashcroft and the insurance companies a chance to correct the mistake? Resist the temptation to send a copy of the letter to *Newsweek*, and know that I remain, together with Benjamin Franklin,

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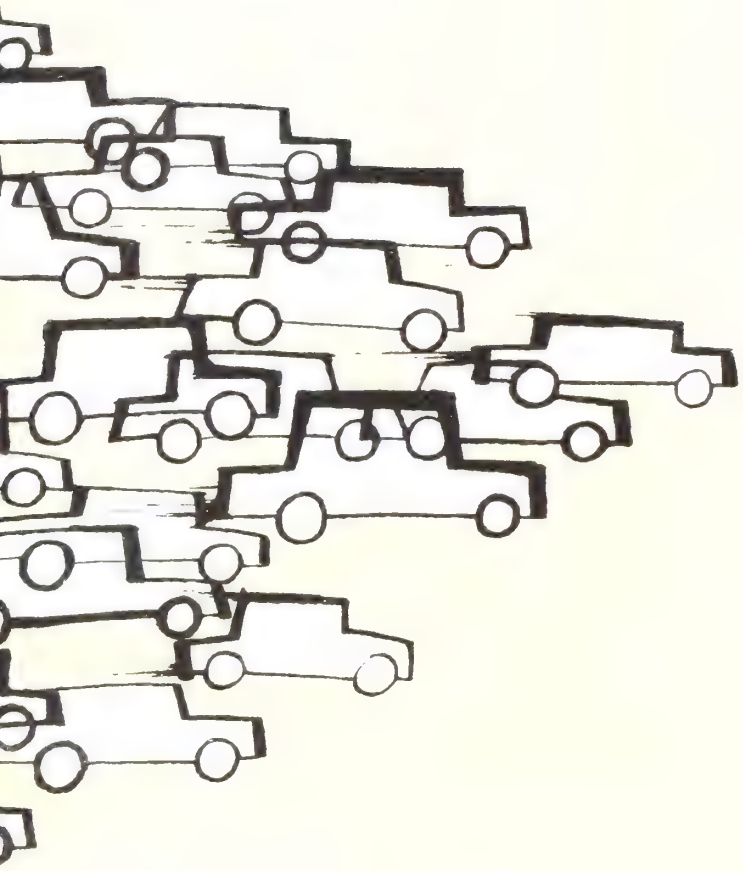
After bubbling its way up through the red sandstone of Ross Shire, our mineral rich water emerges at only one point in all of Scotland: into this secluded, tree fringed pool. A secret well known to neighbouring stillmen for at least three centuries.

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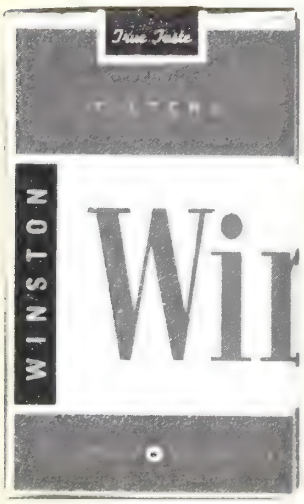
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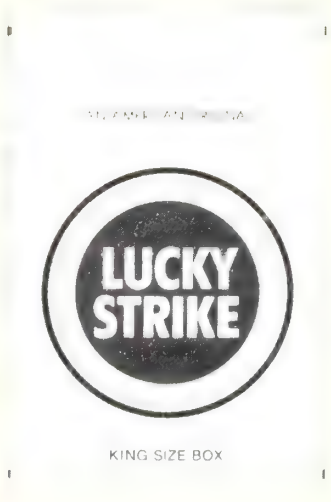
Chance that a U.S. Gulf War vet has reported [illegible] : 1 in
Chance that a vet's reported [illegible] : 1 in
Number of the 8 experts most recently appointed [illegible] who were [illegible] : 8
Number of the 8 who were current or former [illegible] : 8
Number of times Colin Powell said, "I don't recall" or "I can't recall" during [illegible] : 90
Ratio of U.S. spending on the bombing of Serbia in 1999 to U.S. spending on Serbian election aid last fall : 80:1
Hours it took Canadian election workers last year to hand count 13 million ballots cast in their general election : 5
Percentage of Venezuelans voting last December who approved a government-sponsored resolution to oust all union leaders : 62
Percentage of registered Venezuelan voters who voted at all : 23.5
Average number of messages to kidnapped friends and relatives broadcast each week by a Colombian radio show : 90
Number of "bonding sessions" organized by Procter & Gamble each week in Monterrey, Mexico, to encourage employee : 6
Percentage of global economic activity accounted for by the world's 200 largest corporations in [illegible] : 27.5
Percentage of the world's population that these corporations employ : 0.8
Estimated chance that an Internet firm closed down last year : 1 in 50
Amount owed creditors by the touring song-and-dance group Up with People when it went under last December : $7,300,000
Annual number of U.S. elementary school students who play The Stock Market Game, a 10-week trading simulation : 200,000
Amount of play money the children are given to invest : $100,000
Additional amount they may borrow on margin : $100,000
Amount a Danish art museum was fined last year for an exhibition inviting visitors to liquefy live goldfish in blenders : $225
Price of a designer skirt made of hamster pelts, introduced in Britain last year : $2,200
Average number of cows destroyed each day in Britain last year in an effort to eliminate mad cow disease : 2,274
Number of European countries in which cases of the disease have been documented : 13
Estimated chance that an African-American man is HIV-positive : 1 in 50
Percentage change since 1995 in new drug applications filed with the FDA that include test results from abroad : +300
Number of players on Spain's gold-winning disabled Olympic basketball team recently found to have faked their disabilities : 10
Minimum number of mentally retarded Americans who have been executed by the justice system since 1976 : 35
Estimated chance that a U.S. prisoner is mentally retarded : 1 in 14
Percentage of Washington children who completed an 8-year antismoking program in the 1990s who now smoke regularly : 25.4
Percentage of children in the program's nonparticipating control group who now smoke : 25.7
Pounds of marijuana that a private company has been contracted to grow for Canada's health ministry next year : 407
Pounds of marijuana seized in Chicago last December from a 22-year-old's bedroom : 700
Percentage change since 1996 in U.S. sales of organic foods : +122
Percentage change since then in the sales of Krispy Kreme Doughnuts : +110
Amount of Montana's total net farm income in 1999 that did not come from government assistance : 0
Percentage change since 1979 in the number of Montanans engaged in farm work : −0.003
Number of the last 9 presidential elections [illegible] won the vote of Republicans in : 8
Year in which a political candidate first sued Palm Beach County over problems with hanging chads : 1984
Percentage of life that is "just hanging on," according to Bill Clinton : 90
Chance that Vice President Cheney will have a "cardiac event" by 2005, according to Duke University cardiologists : 1 in 2
Days after *Time* named George W. Bush 2000's man of the year that Russians named Vladimir Lenin man of the century : 4

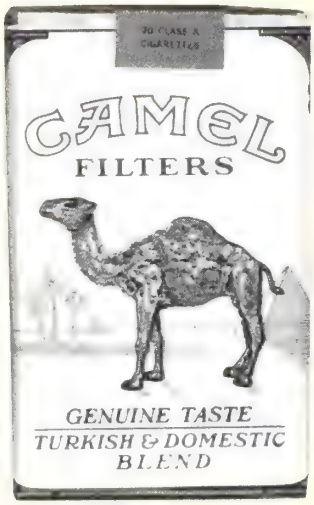
Figures cited have been [illegible]

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READINGS

[Vignette]

MEMORY

By Marcel Proust. This previously untranslated story will appear in The Complete Short Stories of Marcel Proust, *translated by Joachim Neugroschel, to be published in April by Cooper Square Press.*

Last year I spent some time in T., at the Grand Hôtel, which, standing at the far end of the beach, faces the sea. Because of the rancid fumes coming from the kitchens and from the waste water, the luxurious banality of the tapestries, which offered the sole variation on the grayish nudity of the walls and complemented this *exile* decoration, I was almost morbidly depressed; then one day, with a gust that threatened to become a tempest, I was walking along a corridor to my room, when I was stopped short by a rare and delectable scent. I found it impossible to analyze, but it was so richly and so complexly floral that someone must have denuded whole fields, Florentine fields, I assumed, merely to produce a few drops of that fragrance. The sensual bliss was so powerful that I lingered there for a very long time without moving on; beyond the crack of a barely open door, which was the only one through which the perfume could have wafted, I discovered a room that, despite my limited glimpse, hinted at the presence of the most [illegible] ty. How could a guest, at the very heart of this nauseating hotel, have [illegible] such a pure chapel, perfect such a refined boudoir, erect an isolated tower of ivory and fragrance? The sound of footsteps, invisible from the hallway, and, moreover, an almost religious reverence prevented me from nudging the door any further. All at once, the furious wind tore open a poorly attached corridor window, and a salty blast swept through in broad and rapid waves, diluting, without drowning, the concentrated floral perfume. Never will I forget the fine persistence of the original scent adding its tonality to the aroma of that vast wind. The draft had closed the door, and so I went downstairs. But as my utterly annoying luck would have it, when I inquired about the inhabitants of room 47 (for those chosen beings had a number just like anyone else), all that the hotel director could provide were obvious pseudonyms. Only once did I hear a grave and trembling, solemn and gentle male voice calling "Violet," and a supernaturally enchanting female voice answering "Clarence." Despite those two British names, they normally seemed, according to the hotel domestics, to speak French—and without a foreign accent. Since they took their meals in a private room, I was unable to see them. One single time, in vanishing lines so spiritually expressive, so uniquely distinct that they remain for me one of the loftiest revelations of beauty, I saw a tall woman disappearing, her face averted, her [illegible] in a brown and pink woolen coat. Several days later, while ascending a staircase that was quite remote from the mysterious corridor, I smelled a faint, delicious fra- [illegible] I became aware for the first time I

headed toward that corridor and, upon reaching that door, I was numbed by the violence of fragrances, which boomed like organs, growing measurably more intense by the minute. Through the open door the unfurnished room looked [illegible] disemboweled. Some twenty small, broken phials lay on the parquet floor, which was soiled by wet stains. "They left this morning," said the domestic, who was wiping the floor, "and they smashed the flagons so that nobody could use their perfumes, since they couldn't fit them in their trunks, which were crammed with all the stuff they bought here. What a mess!" I pounced on a flagon that had a few final drops. Unbeknownst to the mysterious travelers, those drops still perfume my room.

In my humdrum life I was exalted one day by perfumes exhaled by a world that had been so bland. They were the troubling heralds of love. Suddenly love itself had come, with its roses and its flutes, sculpting, papering, closing, perfuming everything around it. Love had blended with the most immense breath of the thoughts themselves, the respiration that, without weakening love, had made it infinite. But what did I know about love itself? Did I, in any way, clarify its mystery, and did I know anything about it other than the fragrance of its sadness and the smell of its fragrances? Then, love went away, and the perfumes, from shattered flagons, were exhaled with a purer intensity. The scent of a weakened drop still impregnates my life.

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eVIL

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[History]

PARADISE MISPLACED

From The Future of Nostalgia, *by Svetlana Boym, to be published this month by Basic Books. Boym is a professor of Slavic and Comparative Literature at Harvard*

Contrary to our intuition, nostalgia comes to us from medicine, not from poetry or politics. The word—an amalgam of the Greek word *nostos* ("return home") and the New Latin *algia* ("longing")—first appeared in 1688, in the medical dissertation of Johannes Hofer, a Swiss student who coined the term to describe "the sad mood originating from the desire for return to one's native land." (Hofer also suggested *nosomania* and *philopatridomania* to describe the same symptoms.) Among the first victims of the newly diagnosed disease were various displaced people of the seventeenth century—freedom-loving students from the Republic of Berne studying in Basel, domestic help and servants working in France and Germany, Swiss soldiers fighting abroad. Nostalgia, it was said, produced "erroneous representations" that caused the afflicted to lose touch with the present. Longing for their native land became their single-minded obsession. The patients acquired "a lifeless and haggard countenance" and "indifference towards everything," confusing past and present, real and imaginary events. Hofer thought that the course of the disease was mysterious: the ailment spread "along uncommon routes through the untouched course of the channels of the brain to the body," arousing "an uncommon and ever-present idea of the recalled native land in the mind." Longing for home exhausted the "vital spirits," causing nausea, loss of appetite, pathological changes in the lungs, brain inflammation, cardiac arrest, high fever, as well as marasmus and a propensity for suicide.

Nostalgia operated by an "associationist magic," by means of which all aspects of everyday life related to one single obsession. The nostalgist possessed an amazing capacity for re-



The Bed, The Chair, Costume, *[illegible]*

membering sensations, tastes, sounds, smells, the minutiae and trivia of a lost province, minutiae that those who remained there never seemed to notice. Gastronomic and auditory nostalgias were of particular importance. Swiss scientists found that [illegible] soups, thick village milk [illegible] of Alpine valleys were particularly [illegible] triggering a nostalgic response in Swiss soldiers. Supposedly the sounds of "a certain rustic cantilena" that accompanied the [illegible] driving of the herds to pasture immediately provoked an epidemic of nostalgia among a group of Swiss soldiers [illegible]

Early Scots, particularly Highlanders, were known to succumb to [illegible] upon hearing the sound of bagpipes, so much so, in fact, that their military superiors had to prohibit them from playing, singing, or even whistling [illegible] tunes. [illegible]

In the late eighteenth century, during the Revolution of 1789, the French doctor Jourdain Le Cointe [illegible] could be cured only by meeting pain and terror. As evidence, he offered an account of a successful [illegible]

1733, he recounts, the Russian army was stricken by nostalgia just as it ventured into Germany; it was an infection so widespread that the general was compelled to devise a radical treatment. He threatened that "the first to fall sick will be buried alive." This punishment was reported to have been carried out on two or three occasions, which happily cured the Russian army of complaints of nostalgia. Le Cointe noted that autopsies performed on the French soldiers who perished during the Napoleonic army's miserable retreat from Moscow revealed that many of them had the brain inflammation thought to be characteristic of nostalgia.

Although Europeans (with the exception of the British) reported frequent epidemics of nostalgia from the seventeenth century onward, American doctors did not diagnose the disease until the American Civil War. Theodore Calhoun, an American military doctor, wrote of nostalgia as a disease of the mind and of a weak will caused by an idleness conducive to daydreaming, erotomania, and onanism. As for a remedy, "any influence that will tend to render the patient more manly will exercise a curative power," he wrote. "In boarding schools, as perhaps many of us remember, ridicule is wholly relied upon. . . . [The nostalgic] patient can often be laughed out of it by his comrades, or reasoned out of it by appeals to his manhood; but of all potent agents, an active campaign, with attendant marches and more particularly its battles, is the best curative." Those most susceptible to nostalgia were soldiers from the rural districts, particularly farmers; merchants, mechanics, boatmen, and train conductors from the same area or from the city were more likely to resist the sickness. "The soldier from the city cares not where he is or where he eats," wrote Calhoun, "while his country cousin pines for the old homestead and his father's groaning board."

Some symptoms of nostalgia were confused with tuberculosis, but tuberculosis eventually became treatable, whereas nostalgia did not. What had once been a symptom of sickness gradually came to be regarded as a sign of sensibility, an expression of new patriotic feeling. The epidemic of nostalgia was no longer to be cured but to be spread as widely as possible. The new backdrops for nostalgia were not battlefields or hospital wards but rather misty vistas with reflective ponds, passing clouds, and ruins of antiquity. And where native ruins were not available, artificial ruins were built, half destroyed with utmost precision. The leaders of new European nations such as Prussia and Russia erected artificial ruins of their countries' nonexistent histories, simulacra of French parks in Potsdam and Petrodvorets. Longing for home became a central trope of romantic nationalism as the romantics looked for "memorative signs" and correspondences between their inner landscapes and the shape of the world. They charted an affective geography of the native land, one that often mirrored the melancholic landscape of their own psyche.

Every language, it seems, now has a special word for homesickness that its speakers claim to be radically untranslatable—the German *Heimweh*, the French *maladie du pays*, the Spanish *mal de corazón*. Czechs have the word *litost*, which means at once sympathy, grief, remorse, and indefinable longing. The whispering sibilance of the Russian *toska*, made famous in the literature of exiles, evokes the claustrophobic intimacy of the crammed spaces whence one pines for the infinite. The same stifling, almost asthmatic sensation of deprivation can be found also in the shimmering sounds of the Polish *tesknota*, which adds a touch of moody artistry unknown to the Russians, who are enamored of the gigantic and the absolute. The Portuguese and Brazilians have their *saudade*, a tender sorrow, breezy and erotic—not as melodramatic as its Slavic counterpart yet no less profound and haunting. Romanians claim that *dor*, sonorous and sharp like a dagger, is unknown to other nations and speaks of a specifically Romanian dolorous ache. Although each term hews to the specific rhythms of its language, all these untranslatable words are, in effect, synonyms, but synonyms that share a desire for untranslatability, a longing for uniqueness.

[Comments]

THE ROAD TO MEAT

From Letters to Wendy's, *by Joe Wenderoth, published by Verse Press. The novel consists of prose poems written over the course of a year on Wendy's comment cards.*

[ ]

I was so high on Sudafed and whiskey today that I couldn't eat. I got a Coke—actually five Cokes, as I could refill for free. It's times like this—dehydrated, exhausted, unable to imagine home—that your plastic seats, your quiet understandable room, set beside but not quite overlooking the source of real value, offer me a



Woman with Arm Tattoo, [illegible]

tragedy small enough to want to endure.

JULY 12

I often think about overeating. It's strange that I never have. Each bite of my mustard-only double-cheeseburger is so good that I reel in the aftermath. The meaty goodness obliterates as much as it secures. I'm a fleshy bell, incapable of vibrating any more vigorously. If I rang out with any more force I don't know that I would remain a bell—and I don't know that the air could stand me.

AUGUST 22

There used to be a little Ma-and-Pa restaurant across the road, but it couldn't keep up. Everyone over there acted all familiar and cozy, like they knew exactly where they were. I mean, we were natives. Natives! I scoff [illegible] sofar as they claim to be! Build Wendy's everywhere and all alike—and do not fear: you can not, you CAN NOT ever step into the same Wendy's twice.

I see various very human people in Wendy's, the strangest of all being, clearly, the *serious Christians*. Usually strangeness is a pleasure to behold, but in this case I confess that I feel only a kind of empty horror. People *eating* toward eternity! People *looking nice* toward eternity! It is terrible to be real, I know, but it is more terrible to be [illegible]

[illegible]

Today I had a Biggie. Usually I just have a small, and refill. Why pay more? But today I needed a Biggie inside me. Some days, I guess, are like that. Only a Biggie will do. You wake up and you know: today I will get a Biggie and I will put it inside me and I will feel better. [illegible] Biggie [illegible] [illegible]

Today the restaurant was filled with warmth,





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SUBARU

a spirit of caring. The food was just right and the [illegible] with their children. Handsome employees [illegible] Retired couples were given Extra Value [illegible] worthless Canseco.

A beautiful woman with a Biggie. Nothing [illegible] Biggie. She was idiotic, she seemed like she was waiting for someone. What lucky soul could make a beautiful woman with a Biggie wait? Who has that kind of power? What person would a beautiful woman with a Biggie find attractive? Only one answer made sense to me: *another beautiful woman with a Biggie*.

[illegible]

It's good, this not knowing anyone's name. The employees have nametags, but no one believes them. Their anonymity is far too obvious. How monstrous to introduce oneself to one's register person! How useless, how wearying, that information is! Only the shouted names of children make sense here, denoting not a person but a drifting off, a subversive fascination.

[illegible]

The idiotic notion that one should love the other customers. "Love" here really only means: *agree, for the time being, not to attack*. People pretend, though, that each customer is an irreplaceable piece of some priceless puzzle—like the death of each customer is significant for every other customer. It's just not true; one cannot love what one does not know, and—fortunately—one knows very little.

[illegible]

Today I had $15 worth of coffees. I got them one at a time, and dined in. The first five were leisurely, but then the leisure disintegrated. I went through the last five in about five minutes. After a while the register girl looked at her manager as if to say: "Is there something we should do?" The manager said nothing. I said nothing. We understood one another perfectly.

DECEMBER 8

To stroke another customer's head. Run my fingers through his hair and whisper to him: "You're going to be *all right* . . ." I would be called *responsible* for doing all of this if he were bleeding to death on the floor, but I would be called *inappropriate* if I did it when he was in good health. I would be, like all trustworthy prophets, called a nuisance and promptly arrested.

[illegible]

If I were royalty I would want a Biggie and a hundred plain burgers. I would throw away the buns and lay the burgers side by side on the sidewalk so as to form a bed. I would take off all my clothes and lie down in the bed with my Biggie. As people passed by, I would say, "Behold the meaty bed of royalty! Behold the final Biggie!" And I would relax there until I was arrested.

[illegible]

The urge to belong. I'm so jealous when the

[illegible]

LOSE IT ALL

[illegible] Fitness Gaming Corporation's "Pedal 'N Play" and "The Money Mill," devices that combine a bicycle and a treadmill, respectively, with a slot machine; both stop working if the slot machine is idle for [illegible]

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[illegible] hotel/casino, your health spa is another place to offer the "Pedal 'N Play" cycle and "The Money Mill." The spa exercise floor offers little or no source of revenue. Just think of all the [illegible] benefit your customers, your revenue, and your reputation.

Everyone wants to be a winner, and Fitness Gaming Corporation has made that possible. Even if you lose at gaming you win at having a "healthful workout." Imagine that!

employees speak to one another in that *knowing* way. I always look away as if I didn't care, as if their easy affection with one another was the last thing on my mind. But why do I yearn so persistently to be included—what would *being included* mean? An implicit motherland? A small drink of blood for my hungry shade?

FEBRUARY 10

One watches the others order. An aesthetic develops. It's not the worst thing that could happen. Yes, a weariness lurks, often, in the obvious next step—the dream of a school. The only thing worse than endeavoring to create a school is endeavoring to maintain a school. Which is why I like, above all, those customers who, in the middle of their order and quite without warning, change their minds.

MAY 22

I'd like to have my muscles removed. Resume the inanimate. Wendy's allows me to extract myself from the retarded narcissism of animal thrivings. I sit still in a warm booth and get thought. All movement wants, in the end, is stillness; the animate is just the failure of movement to get what it wants—one sleeping body. The road to heaven is paved with meat; the road to meat is not paved at all.

[Orders]

TAKEOUT, DELIVERED

From transcripts of two tape-recorded conversations between undercover investigators from the Office of Special Investigations at the U.S. General Accounting Office and two gun dealers in Nebraska and Oregon, respectively. The calls were part of an investigation by the House Committee on Government Reform into the availability of long-range .50-caliber sniper rifles and armor-piercing ammunition. With an effective range of four miles and the ability to pierce several inches of steel, .50-caliber rifles are among the most powerful and destructive firearms legally available in the United States. The rifles were widely used by U.S. infantrymen in the Gulf War to penetrate armored personnel carriers and concrete bunkers. Convicted felons and children under eighteen are not allowed to buy the ammunition or new rifles, though secondhand sales of the rifles are not regulated.

AGENT: Yes, I'm looking to see if you carry .50-caliber BMG armor-piercing incendiary.

DEALER: A guy just bought the last thousand rounds about twenty minutes ago. I will have more back in here Monday or Tuesday.

AGENT: Okay. How much is it a round?

DEALER: Two hundred and forty dollars a hundred.

AGENT: This ammo will go through, say, metal, won't it?

DEALER: Uh, yeah, it'll go through metal.

AGENT: Okay. Do you think it would go through, like, an armored limousine?

DEALER: Well, I think it would. [*Laughing*]

AGENT: How 'bout bulletproof glass?

DEALER: Oh, yeah, it'll go through that.

AGENT: Even if it's ballistic glass, it'll still go through?

DEALER: Right.

AGENT: With the first round, probably?

DEALER: Right.

AGENT: Okay. Now, I live on the East Coast—can you send it to me?

DEALER: Uh, whereabouts do you live?

AGENT: Uh, I live in Virginia, but I'd like it shipped to D.C.

DEALER: Okay.

AGENT: How can I go about doing that?

DEALER: I'll put my assistant on, and she can give you all the information.

AGENT: Okay, but I've got a couple of technical questions first. This ammunition, does it clog up the barrel of the weapon?

DEALER: Oh, no—it's got the soft jacket on the outside. We also have a sniper round we do for the government. What kind of gun are you shooting?

AGENT: A Barrett Model 82.

DEALER: We've got a round we've developed for the Barrett, a solid-brass bullet with a poly coating on it—that's our sniper round.

AGENT: And that's what you've sold the government?

DEALER: Yes.

AGENT: Now, that sniper round, does that give you higher velocity, greater distance, or what?

DEALER: It gives you the best accuracy.

AGENT: So if I wanted to use this against a person, let's say, the sniper round would be better?

DEALER: Right, right, because it makes the rifle real accurate.

AGENT: If I got the sniper round instead of the armor-piercing incendiary, though, would it still go through ballistic glass?

DEALER: Oh, I don't know—I don't think we've tested on ballistic glass. It'll go through three-inch aircraft window.

AGENT: But, say, an armored limousine?

DEALER: Uh, we've never tested it on that.

AGENT: All right. What's the price for these sniper rounds?

DEALER: Four dollars a round by the hundred, or fifty a round by the ten-round.

AGENT: So they're more th[illegible]

DEALER: Oh yeah.

[illegible] Well, I think I'm better off with API. I'm [illegible] the this against, um, you know, something with an armored limousine and something with ballistic glass, and I just want to make sure I'm going to be able to penetrate. So put me on with your assistant there, and maybe I can figure out how I can get this shipped to me.

DEALER: Okay, hold on.

ASSISTANT: Okay. What we'll need is a copy of your driver's license to prove that we're shipping to someone over the age of twenty-one.

AGENT: Okay.

ASSISTANT: And a statement that you are over the age of twenty-one and there are no federal, state, or local laws that prohibit you from receiving the ammunition. Once we have that on file, you'd never have to do it again—that's just, you know, for the first time.

AGENT: Okay. So I just have to write a statement out and sign it, saying that I'm over twenty-one years of age and there's no federal, state, or local laws prohibiting me from—

ASSISTANT: Receiving the information.

AGENT: Ammunition, you mean.

ASSISTANT: And, uh, this can be faxed to us. Once we have it on file, we can send some stuff to you.

AGENT: Okay.

ASSISTANT: Can I get your name?

AGENT: My first name is Roger.

ASSISTANT: Okay.

AGENT: Well, actually, that's just what they call me. My real name is Julian.

ASSISTANT: Okay.

AGENT: You can see why I want to be called Roger!

ASSISTANT: There you go. [*Laughter*] Okay.

•

[illegible] Can I help you?

AGENT: Yes, I'm interested in ordering some .50-caliber BMG ammo. I was wondering if you have any in stock.

DEALER: No, it's all sold. I'm taking orders for a month from now.

AGENT: I may be interested in some API.

[illegible] Okay.

AGENT: Now, do you know a lot about these rounds?

DEALER: Well, um, some.

[illegible] think they'll go through bullet [illegible].

DEALER: Well, they're loaded with the bullet weight the military uses now—660 or something.

AGENT: Uh-huh.

DEALER: In the old days they used 700 grains or something. But now, I guess they use 660, so they're getting a little more velocity out of it. And I just can't see glass standing up to that.

AGENT: How about an armored limousine?

DEALER: You're using that to test it?

AGENT: Well, you say testing— Yeah, I'll be testing against armored limousines. But it's gotta work.

DEALER: Right.

AGENT: You know, I don't want to have the chance of it not working.

DEALER: Well, there's no way that I can guarantee it. I'm not familiar with the glass they're using nowadays.

AGENT: But you've never had any complaints from your customers about these being misfires or anything? These rounds are pretty good?

DEALER: They'll bore through a fair amount of steel.

AGENT: Okay.

DEALER: I don't know how strong the glass is, but the ammo will go through a fair amount of steel. [*Laughing*] It'll go through the whole car.

AGENT: Okay. Would it go through a lightly armored tank, do you think?

DEALER: It won't go through any modern tank, because we have too much armor on them now.

AGENT: Uh-huh.

DEALER: But it would probably go through two and a half or three inches of mild steel.

AGENT: Oh. An armored limousine definitely doesn't have that much on it.

DEALER: That's what I'm saying. I think a .50 would go all the way through it.

AGENT: Okay. And then, if I theoretically wanted to use these rounds to take down an aircraft—say, a helicopter, or something like that—I should be able to do that, shouldn't I?

DEALER: Yeah, they're not armored. It'll go through any light stuff like that.

AGENT: Good. You know, I'm very happy to see that we'll be able to do business. Here on the East Coast, when you go to buy ammunition, they ask a lot of questions.

DEALER: Oh.

AGENT: And I don't like people asking me questions about why I want this ammunition.

DEALER: Well, see, out here they use it for hunting.

AGENT: Uh-huh. Well, you could say I'm going to be using this for hunting also. But just hunting of a different kind.

DEALER: [*Laughing*] As long as it's nothing illegal.

AGENT: Well, I wouldn't consider it illegal.

DEALER: All right.

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ROBERT SOLOMON, Ph.D., is the Quincy Lee Centennial Professor of Philosophy at the University of Texas, where he has taught since 1972. A recipient of both the Standard Oil Outstanding Teaching Award and the President's Associates Teaching Award, he is the author of more than a dozen books in philosophy and psychology, including *About Love* (1988), *The Passions* (1976, 1993), *From Hegel to Existentialism* (1988), and *Ethics and Excellence* (1992).

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Cal Lucas, *Dog and Hare*, 2000, oil on canvas, 60 x 48 in. Courtesy of the artist and Littlejohn Contemporary in New York City.

[Memoir]

IN THE WOODS

From an essay by Leslie Rubinkowski, in the Fall 2000 issue of Creative Nonfiction. *Rubinkowski teaches writing at West Virginia University and Carnegie Mellon.*

The day my grandfather saw the naked woman, he got up at dawn. He and his brother Louie had parked the Chevy pickup at the edge of the woods and stepped down between the trees, carrying their rifles. When they lost sight of the road they parted, Louie disappearing deep. My grandfather found a stump, sat down, and waited.

Hours passed with no sign of deer or any other living thing. The middle of the day came, but among the trees it was dark and still.

Then my grandfather heard a sound, a shuffling in the leaves. He looked up.

"Louie," he said, "is that you?"

It was not. It was a woman, and she was standing before him, naked. She was young and very pretty and shivering in the cold. My grandfather stared at the woman. She hugged herself, made some small joke. She offered no excuse for her nakedness, and it did not occur to my grandfather that she needed one. She smiled at him, and the woods fell silent again.

After a long time my grandfather stood, still cradling the rifle in his arms. Then he turned and leaned the gun against the stump. He slid off his jacket and held it up for the woman to see.

"Here," he said.

"I'll bring it back to you, I promise," she said.

"No," he said. "It's okay. I got long johns."

My grandfather turns to look at me. It is not deer season anymore but a night in July, maybe August. We sit on his back porch. I am fourteen. I know my grandfather wants to see

what I am thinking, so I lower my eyes and stare at my bare feet. While he talked the sun slumped below the trees just behind the beagle pens at the back of the yard. The sky is purple turning over to blue. In the kitchen behind us my grandmother says, "Oh God." Neither of us moves. I scuff my toes on the fake grass carpet. I study my feet. They are huge for a kid my size.

He knows he has me.

This is a true story. I spent my childhood listening to my grandfather lie. That is what made me the kind of person who asks too many questions. Like: Then what?

Like: Did you ever get that jacket back?

Like: Have you ever wanted to know the truth about something so much you made it up?

Some facts about my grandfather:

He was born on September 13, 1913, in Phillips, Pennsylvania, to Hungarian immigrants, the second child of six. He dropped out of school in the sixth grade and went to work in the coal mines after his father died. He began smoking around the same time—unfiltered Chesterfields. He met my grandmother at a dance. The first time he saw her she was sitting at the edge of a dance floor on a wooden folding chair, wearing a white lace dress.

They married on July 31, 1931. They had three children—my mother, who was the youngest, and two sons. My grandfather was a mechanic in the mines, and he settled his family into a company house in a neighborhood of other miners and their families in what people called a coal patch. Sometimes he drank. Sometimes he drank too much. On one of those nights my grandmother threw a bottle of ketchup at him, and when my mother and her brothers saw the spatters on the wall they thought she had finally killed him. In 1941 a mine ceiling collapsed on him; a sheet of slate shaved off his face, and the crush of rock nearly killed him. They rebuilt his face, but he was different. After the accident he got softer, stopped drinking. He started telling stories.

He had his teeth pulled around 1945 but hated the way his false set felt so he went around toothless. He wore his teeth only for special occasions, like weddings and funerals. At those times he disappeared into his room and emerged wearing a blue suit, white shirt, black shoes. He lingered outside his door, studying the plastic runner in the hall, and when his eyes darted up his smile shone like a burst of flashbulb, an unexpected slice of moon, and from the living room everyone already dressed and waiting would smile back and say how nice he looked, and he would open his mouth a little more and his eyes would get shiny behind his glasses, and he would study the runner again, and although I am not a child anymore I still ask myself: What would cause a grown man bashful about having teeth?

He lied to me every time I saw him – once a week, minimum. Most Saturday nights my parents would drop us off with my grandparents and go dancing; we would sleep over, and they would pick us up in the morning after my grandmother had served us a breakfast of pancakes and hot dogs smothered in homemade syrup that tasted suspiciously like whiskey. I remember those Saturday nights as an improbable cocktail of Lawrence Welk hours and marathon story sessions. Sometimes my grandmother would corner me and explain the recipe for a kind of soup she made that had an omelette floating on top, or confide her dream of becoming an accountant, squashed when her mother made her quit school in the eighth grade to clean houses. My grandmother never lost the sense that she was destined for better, and she was always trying something artistic. While supper cooked one afternoon, she spray-painted every surface in the living room gold. We all had to agree that it looked pretty amazing.

But most nights when I tried to slink across the side yard into the house, my grandfather would catch me. "Hey, farmer," he would holler. "Come here. I gotta tell you somethin'."

Sometimes I would be paddling across the living room with a plate full of nut rolls and a head full of adolescent disco misery, and he would say something like, "Boy, I'll bet Mazeroski was cold," which was my signal to sit down and start listening.

Some stories were set in the mines where he worked, tales of horrible accidents involving heavy machinery and rats as big as lunchpails. A few took place in his childhood, like the one about George Washington, a kid in second grade who was so stupid my grandfather sold him his own shoes. But most of my grandfather's stories unfolded in the woods.

Most people went into the woods and got lost. My grandfather found things. Once he saw a laughing monkey in a tree. Once he stumbled upon a truckload of shih tzus. Once, when he was a boy, he found something in the woods, and he didn't know what the hell it was. It bristled with quills just like a porcupine, but the quills were more like fur. It had a bill like a duck and beady black eyes.

Like a platypus? I asked. I was probably twelve.

He looked at me as if to say: Shut up. "We put it in a bucket and filled it full of water," he said. "We called the game warden. He came over and looked at the thing. 'I don't know what the hell that is,' he said. He took the bucket and

HOW IT'S DONE

told them to wait. I will return once the

[Encommium]

LESSONS OF THE REVOLUTION

From a book on children's rights issued to first graders in St. Petersburg, Russia. The book was paid for by President Vladimir Putin's Unity Party. Translated from the Russian by Marina Makanova.

T

sponsibility for everything in this country.

In Russia.

he would become president and take responsibility for everything. Nobody knew that. But everyone on the block knew that little Vovka was not afraid of anyone and would not let anya very gifted boy.

fighter with a strong personality, that he would fight to the end and never play turncoat.

but all the boys and girls knew that Volodya

Then he grew up; he studied and worked a lot; he helped good men and hated bad ones.

flies a fighter plane, skis down mountains, and

And all the other presidents of different countries meet with him and hold him in high esteem. This is shown on TV and covered in newspapers.

of Russia—and they elected him president.

Now everyone says, "Russia, Putin, Unity."

It is a great country, and everyone says that

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin.

He is our president of Russia; he is your president!

the Internet through Russia. Is that clear?

KRAVCHENKO: I'm not letting Gongadze out. I've put armed surveillance there. I want to make a study of his contacts. What it all adds up to.

KUCHMA: And does Gongadze have a team? They named some surnames there— These are the ones who are scribbling this dirt. There are three of them.

KRAVCHENKO: We have them. We have them all. But I want to start with him, because I want to see how the general prosecutor will react.

KUCHMA: What connection does the general prosecutor have to Gongadze?

KRAVCHENKO: Well, there's his complaint. This

KUCHMA: And why does every shit have to write to the general prosecutor's office?

KRAVCHENKO: It depends on who's got the money and who pays— [*Laughing*] I wish you all the best.

*

KRAVCHENKO: Well, Leonid Danylovych, there's news.

KUCHMA: Gongadze, or what?

KRAVCHENKO: Exactly. Today we found something out. We're following him. I want to pop him. I want to pop him straight and simple. I'll throw in a prostitute as bait—the very best there is. He won't get away. Everything is working out. We'll be able to deal with Gongadze soon.

*

KUCHMA [*On the phone with Leonid Derkach, head of the State Security Service*]: Listen, they just showed me these newspapers that are being published. Hryhory Omelchenko is continuing to publish a paper in Kremenchuk.

Well, what, are you bullshitting me? I'm telling you, September 15 he published a newspaper. And *Svoboda* is still being published. Well, there are such insulting caricatures there.

So then you invite Yulia [Tymoshenko, deputy prime minister]. Fuck your mother, you invite Yulia and ask: "Dear one, what the fuck are you doing? Do you want us to destroy you completely?" And say: "Why are you financing Omelchenko?" Don't you know how to do your job? How it's done all over the world? They aren't one fucking bit afraid of you. Fuck your mother, what's with you?

So that's why. Get going.

37 things a writer can do to avoid writing.

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OF LARGER DARKNESS

From Grammars of Creation, *by George Steiner.*

We [illegible] beginnings. [illegible] in our dusty "inception." The medieval scribe marks the opening line, the new chapter, with an illuminated capital. In its golden or carmine vortex the illuminator of manuscripts sets heraldic beasts, dragons at morning, singers and prophets. The initial, where this term signifies beginning and primacy, acts as a fanfare. [illegible] evident—whereby in all things natural and human the origin is the most excellent. Today, in Western orientations—observe the muted presence of morning light in that word—the reflexes, turns of perception, are those of afternoon, of twilight.

There have been previous senses of ending and fascinations with sundown in Western culture. Philosophic witness, the arts, historians of feeling, report on "closing-times in the gardens of the West" during the crises of the Roman imperial order, during the apocalyptic fears at the approach of the first millennium A.D., in the wake of the Black Death and the Thirty Years' War. Motions of decay, of autumn and failing light, have always attached to men and women's awareness of physical ruin, of common mortality. Moralists, even prior to Montaigne, pointed out that [illegible] old enough to die. There is in the most confident metaphysical construct, in the most affirmative work of art, a memento mori, a labor, implicit or explicit, to hold at bay the seepage of fatal time, of entropy into each and every living form. It is from this wrestling match that philosophic discourse and the generation of art derive their informing stress, the unresolved tautness of which logic and beauty are formal modes. The cry "the great god Pan is dead" haunts even those societies with which we associate, perhaps too conventionally, the gusto of optimism.

Nevertheless, there is, I think, in the climate of spirit at the end of the twentieth century, a

core tiredness. The inward chronometry, the contracts with time that so largely determine our consciousness, point to late afternoon in ways that are ontological—this is to say, of the essence—of the fabric of home. We are, or feel ourselves to be, latecomers. The shadows lengthen. We seem to lean forward and toward the night as do heliotropic plants.

Inhumanity is, so far as we have historical evidence, perennial. There have been no utopias, no communities of justice or forgiveness. Our current alarms at the violence in our streets, at the famines in the so-called Third World, at regressions into barbaric ethnic conflicts, at the possibility of pandemic disease must be seen against the backdrop of a quite exceptional moment. Roughly from the time of Waterloo to that of the massacres on the Western Front in 1915–16, the European bourgeoisie experienced a privileged season, an armistice with history. Underwritten by the exploitation of industrial labor at home and colonial rule abroad, Europeans knew a century of progress, of liberal dispensations, of reasonable hope. It is in the afterglow, no doubt clouded, of this exceptional calendar—note the constant comparison of the years prior to August 1914 to a "long summer" that we utter our present bleakness.

We have not yet begun to gauge the damage to man, as species, as self-entitled homo *sapiens*—inflicted by events since 1914. We do not yet begin to grasp the coexistence in time and in space, a coexistence framed by the immediacy of graphic and vocal presentation in the global media, of Western superfluity, and the starvation, the destitution, the infant mortality, which now batten on some three fifths of mankind. There is a dynamic of clear-sighted lunacy in our waste of what is left of natural resources, of fauna and flora. The south col of Everest is a garbage dump. Forty years after Auschwitz, the Khmer Rouge bury alive an estimated hundred thousand innocent human beings. The rest of the world, fully apprised of the fact, looks on. Any second now soot will start flowing from our factories to the killing fields. To repeat: violence, oppression, economic enslavement, and social irrationality have been endemic in history, whether tribal or metropolitan. But this century has given depth of new warrant to the ancient, almost possibility of a reversal of evolution, of a systematic turnabout toward bestialization. It is this that makes Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* and *Moses and Monotheism* the key tablets of modernity.

What I want to consider briefly is the impact of this inhuman continuum on grammar, where I take grammar to mean the articulate organization of perception, reflection, and experience, the nerve structure of consciousness when it communicates with itself and with others. I intuit (these are, of course, almost wholly conjectural domains) that the future tense came relatively late into human speech. It may have developed as late as the end of the last ice age, together with the "futurities" entailed by food storage, by the making and preservation of tools beyond immediate need, and by the very gradual discovery of animal breeding and agriculture. In some "meta-" or pre-linguistic register, animals would appear to know presentness and, one supposes, a measure of remembrance. The future tense, the ability to discuss possible events on the day after one's funeral or in space a million years hence, looks to be specific to *Homo sapiens*. As does the use of the subjunctive and of counterfactual modes that are themselves kindled, as it were, to future tense. It is only man, so far as we can conceive, who has the means of altering his world by resort to "if" clauses, who can generate clauses such as: "If Caesar had not gone to the Capitol that day." It seems to me that this fantastic, formally incommensurable "grammatology" of verbal futurities, of subjunctives and optatives, proved indispensable to the survival, to the evolution, of the "language animal," confronted, as we were and are, by the scandal, by the incomprehensibility of individual death. There is a sense in which every human use of the future tense of the verb "to be" is a negation, however limited, of mortality. Even as every use of an "if" sentence tells of a refusal of the brute inevitability, of the despotism of the fact. "Shall," "will," and "if," circling in intricate fields of semantic force around a hidden center or nucleus of potentiality, are the passwords to hope.

Hope and fear are supreme fictions empowered by syntax. They are as indivisible from each other as the [illegible] Hope encloses a fear of unfulfillment. Fear has in it a mustard seed of hope, the intimation of overcoming [illegible] that is problematic.

Out of Mosaic and prophetic Judaism grew two major branches or "heresies." The first is Christianity, with its promise of God's kingdom to come, of reparation for unjust suffering, of a Last Judgment and an eternity of love through the Son. The future tense is [illegible] nearly every saying of Jesus'. He is, for his followers, hope made flesh. The second branch, again Jewish in its theoreticians and early proponents, is utopian socialism and, most signally, Marxism. Here the future tense is [illegible] made immanent, the kingdom of justice and equality, of peace and prosperity, is proclaimed to be of this world. With the voice of Amos, so-

[illegible]

nism cry anathema on selfish wealth, on social oppression, on the crippling of countless common lives by insensate greed. The desert marches on the city. After the bitter struggle (after Golgotha) comes "the exchange of love for love, [illegible]"

[illegible]

YOU FIND YOU CAN LEAVE IT ALL

By Les Murray, from Conscious and Verbal, *to be published next fall by Farrar, Straus and* [illegible]

Like a charging man, hit
and settling face down in the ringing,
his cause and panic obsolete,

you find you can leave it all:
your loved people, pain, achievement
dwindling upstream of this raft-fall,

back with the dishes that translated
beasts and croplands into the ongoing
self portrait your genes had mandated.

Ribbed fluorescent glare-panels flow
over you down urgent corridors,
dismissing midday outside. Slow,

they'd resemble wet spade-widths in a pit;
you've left grief behind you, for others;
your funeral: who'll know you'd re-planned it?

[illegible]
When forebrainy consciousness goes

wordless selves it'd barely met,
mertias of rhythm, the life habit
continue the battle for you.

If enough of those hold
you may wake up in this world,
ache-boned, tear-sponged, dripped into:

[illegible] "Yes."
It's Before again, with shadow. No tunnels.
[illegible]

It's the evening of some day. But it's also
afterlife: to in here on, by that consent
you found in your to going where you went.

The twentieth century has put in doubt the theological, the philosophical, and the political-material insurance for hope. It queries the rationale and credibility of future tenses. It makes understandable Kafka's statement that "there is abundance of hope, but none for us."

It is not the cant phrase "the death of God," which predated Nietzsche and to which I am unable to assign any arguable meaning, that is pertinent. The determinant of our current situation is more embracing. I would call it "the eclipse of the messianic." In Western religions, the messianic, whether personalized or metaphoric, has signified renovation, the end of historical temporality, and the coming in glory of an afterworld. Over and again, the future tense of hope has sought to date this event (the year 1000 or 1666 or, among present-day chiliastic sects, the turn of our millennium). In a literal sense, hope has sprung eternal. Western faiths are redemption narratives. But the messianic is no less instrumental in secular programs. For anarchist and Marxist imaginings of the future, it will be represented by the "withering away of the state." Behind this figure lies Kant's argument on universal peace and the Hegelian thesis of an end to history. In a paradoxical regard, the messianic can be independent of any postulate of God: it stands for man's access to perfectibility, to a higher and, presumably, enduring condition of reason and of justice.

Future tenses are an idiom of the messianic. Take away energizing anticipation, the luminous imperative of waiting, and these tenses will be end-stopped. "Life expectancy" is, then, no longer a messianic-utopian projection but an actuarial statistic. Such pressures on the incipience of meaning and communication in the individual and collective subconscious, on the means of articulate speech, are gradual. Figures of daily discourse, totally devoid of concrete truth—"sunrise," for example—will persist like domestic ghosts. Except with masters of poetry and of speculative thought, language is conservative and opaque to nascent intuitions (hence the need for mathematical and logically formal codes in the swiftly moving sciences). But just as the almost imperceptible tectonic movements in the deeps of the earth sever and reshape continents, so the forces emanating from the eclipse of the messianic will find manifest expression. Grammars of nihilism flicker on the horizon. Emily Dickinson put it succinctly. Unless I misread, ours are "Those Evenings of the Brain."

Valedictions look backward. In our age of transition to new mappings, to new ways of telling the story, the natural and the "human"

sciences present a spiraling motion. It is that of which Nietzsche's "eternal return" and Yeats's "great gyres" are images. Knowledge proceeds forward technically, in its methods, in the ground it covers. But it seeks out origins. It would identify and grasp the source. In this movement toward "primacy," different sciences, different bodies of systematic inquiry, draw strikingly close to one another.

Cosmology and astrophysics are proposing models of the birth of our universe with a scenic sweep and speculative flight that are far closer to ancient or "primitive" creation myths than they are to mechanistic positivism. Just now, the hypothesis of "continuous creation," of the provenance of matter out of interstellar "dark matter" or nothingness, is out of favor. Some kind of "big bang" is thought to have detonated our cosmos around 15 billion years ago. Background radiation and the compaction of "lumps" in new galaxies are held to be spoors of this *incipit*. In a sovereign paradox, the farther the horizon of radio astronomy, of the observation of nebulae at the "edge of the universe," the deeper our descent into the temporal abyss, into the primordial past in which expansion began. The crux is indeed the concept of a beginning. Our current magi tell us that it is, *stricto sensu*, absurd, without meaning, to ask what was before the initial nanoseconds of the "bang." There was nothing. Nothingness excludes temporality. Time and the coming into being of being are quintessentially one (exactly as St. Augustine taught). The present of the verb "to be," the first "is," creates and is created by the fact of existence. Although the conditions of "strangeness" and "singularity"—terms that reach as probingly into metaphysics or poetics as they do into the physics of cosmology—during the initial particle of time may still escape our computations, late-twentieth-century science is now "within three seconds" of the start of the universe. The creation story can be told as never before.

In this story, the evolution of organic life comes late. Here also the energies of insight press on origination. The question as to the origin and evolution of self-replicating molecular structures occupies paleontology, biochemistry, physical chemistry, and genetics. Life-forms more and more rudimentary, nearer and nearer to the threshold of the inorganic, are being discovered or modeled. The study of DNA (where the double helix is itself an icon of the spiraling pattern in today's sciences and systems of sensibility) leads back to the inception of ordered vitality, of the encoding of developmental possibilities. This "re-duction," or leading backward, has brought with it the likelihood that genetic material, capable of self-reproduction, will be created in the laboratory. The Adamic act and the making of the golem are conceivably concerned.

The quest for point zero in astrophysics for the ultimate foundation of organic life in molecular biology, has its counterpart in the investigations of the human psyche. In progressive interplay, neurophysiology, genetics, neurochemistry, the study of artificial intelligence and psychology, analytic and clinical, are edging toward the earliest sediments of mental being. The subconscious, even, conceivably, the outlying regions of the unconscious—of that first long night in us—are being drawn toward observation. This rising out of chaos is mimed perfectly in the celebrated initial chord of Wagner's *Ring*, whose resonance, simultaneously radiant and ominous, poses the question: As we comb the deeps, what monsters are we trawling?

Arrestingly, as on a spiral staircase, descent into the past and the ascent of knowledge meet in ambiguous intimacy. Archaic religious-mythological figurations re-emerge, barely concealed. Marx's 1844 manuscripts infer some catastrophic event in the genesis of society that provoked the deployment of class enmity, of social exploitation and the cash-nexus. In the Freudian legend of the structuring of the human psyche, familial and social relations arise from the primal murder of the father by the horde of his sons. In the anthropology of Levi-Strauss, the domestication of fire makes man "transgress" into culture, it severs him from nature and impels him toward the solitude of history. Quite obviously, these scenarios of explanation are borrowed from that of Original Sin, of the Fall of Man out of the sphere of innocent grace into that tragic knowingness or historicity. As we seek out the "lost" beginnings of our universe, of our organicity, of our psychic identity and social context, of our language and historical temporality, this search, this "long day's journey into night," is not neutral. It tells, as Hegel famously taught, of twilight. It adumbrates intuitions of some primal error. It manifests what is, as I have tried to suggest, the most deep-seated of the many crises or revolutions we are experiencing: that of the future tense. The utopian, messianic, positivist-meliorist "futures" presumed, blueprinted in the Western legacy from Plato to Lenin, from the Prophets to Leibniz, may no longer be available to our syntax. We now look back at them. They are monuments for remembrance, as obstinately haunting as Easter Island stone faces, on the journey into our outset. We now remember the futures that were.



SOUND AND FURY

The politics of noise in a loud society

By Garret Keizer

In those days the world teemed, the people multiplied, the world bellowed like a wild bull, and the great god was aroused by the clamour. Enlil heard the clamour and he said to the gods in council, "The uproar of mankind is intolerable and sleep is no longer possible by reason of the babel." So the gods agreed to exterminate mankind.

—The Epic of Gilgamesh

In this way begins the earliest written version of the Great Flood myth, which reappears in altered form more than a thousand years later as the biblical story of Noah and the Ark. The Sumerian origins of the Gilgamesh epic may help to explain why the gods are so incensed. Sumeria is generally considered the world's first civilization; that is, the first place where human beings create a distinctly urban society. It seems that by at least the third millennium B.C.E. the world has begun to grow noisy, at least for those living in the mud-brick cities of the Fertile Crescent, the first people on earth to hear the shake, rattle, and roll of turning wheels. The city that never sleeps is born here, memorialized in a story about angry gods who cannot sleep either. The twenty-first-century tenant who some nights would like to strangle his noisy neighbor lives no more than a step or two from some literate Mesopotamian who apparently imagined drowning his.

Human noise is political from its inception, not only because it emerges with the *polis*—that artificial forest where the tree that falls always makes a sound—but also because it lends itself so well to political conflict. Noise is both an objective and a subjective phenomenon; it comprises both common and uncommon ground. On the one hand, a decibel is a decibel is a decibel. The fact that the human ear can endure about two continuous hours of a power drill but only thirty minutes of a typical video arcade before sustaining permanent hearing loss and the related fact that eighty-year-old Sudanese villagers hear better than thirty-year-old Americans are just that: facts. On the other hand, the reasons why an airport will affect its neighbors in different ways, leaving some depressed or hypertensive and others relatively unfazed, are as variable and invisible as sound itself. Even the gods who confer with Enlil are not of the same party on the noise issue. At least one of them objects to eliminat-

Garret Keizer is the author of No Place But Here: A Personal History of Vermont *and* The Unspeakable: Discord in Community *and Home. His most recent book is* [illegible]

NOISE HAS BEEN LINKED TO EVERY KNOWN BY-PRODUCT OF STRESS, LITERALLY AND OTHERWISE, AURALLY AND—THERE IS STRONG EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST—MORALLY AS WELL



ing human commotion at its source, and consequently a chosen few are able to step blinking from the ark into a temporarily quieter world.

By the time we get to the monotheistic universe of Genesis, the flooding of the earth is presented as the result of God's moral indignation. Wickedness, not noisiness, is what starts the rain. Yet I can think of few symbols more suited to wickedness than noise, usually defined as "unwanted sound"—like defining an assault as "unwanted attention." Loud noise hates nature and nurture alike. Certain species of birds fail to learn their mating songs, and therefore to reproduce, in noisy environments; as early as 1975, researcher Arline Bronzaft found that children on the train-track side of a New York public school were lagging a year behind their classmates on the other side of the building in learning to read. Even relatively low levels of noise can interfere with conversation (at 55 to 60 decibels); the price of making ourselves heard is a loss of nuance, inflection, vocal stamina—in every sense a "loss of voice." Noise has been linked to heart disease, high blood pressure, low birth weight, gastrointestinal disorders, headaches, fatigue, insomnia—in short, to nearly every known by-product of stress. (Anti-stress medications are actually tested by exposing experimental subjects to loud sounds.) Noise deafens us, aurally and—there is strong evidence to suggest—morally as well. People subjected to high levels of noise are less likely to assist strangers in difficulty, less likely to recommend raises for workers, more likely to administer electric shocks to other human subjects.

Noise speaks danger; it both threatens and invites aggression. It triggers the physiological chemistry of the "fight-or-flight" response. Before we were even human, noise signaled the approach of the carnivore, of lightning and lava. More recently it became the alarm of invasion, first of the barbarian outside the gates and increasingly of the barbarian within. The audio-terrorist turns into decibels the dynamics of every relationship based on unrequited power: My noise can penetrate your quiet, but your quiet can never penetrate my noise. "My noise is my right" means "Your ear is my hole."

To this little rant of mine the Roman philosopher Seneca offers a censorious tut-tut. "I cannot for the life of me see that quiet is as necessary to a person who has shut himself away to do some studying as it is usually thought to be. Here am I with a babel of noise going on all about me." He is living over a bathhouse; the noises rising from downstairs include all manner of "grunting," "hissing," and "pummeling," as well as "the hair remover, continually giving vent to his shrill and penetrating cry in order to advertise his presence . . ." Seneca boasts that he takes "no more notice [of] all this roar than . . . of waves or falling water." To be distracted by noise, he claims, is to succumb to one's own inner disquiet. I believe him, somewhat. But let us credit Seneca's stoicism for enduring the 50 decibels of a very loud hiss and estimate the cry of the hair remover at, say, 65 decibels, 75 if he has a very loud voice. Today Seneca would be living over a gym where the amplified music might be cranked to 100 decibels in order to produce the adrenaline rush that keeps the iron pumping. (And for every increase of 10 decibels, the volume of sound doubles.) If Seneca were one of the quarter million New Yorkers living within 100 yards of an elevated train track, he might be able to test his fortitude with a screech of 115 decibels, as measured at the front step of his apartment building. At these levels philosophical detachment is almost a joke. What do you call a stoic who lives near the el? Deaf.

City ordinances aimed at noise date roughly from Seneca's time; Caesar is said to have banned nighttime chariot riding from the streets of Rome. Fiorello La Guardia tried to outlaw organ grinders; New Yorkers, to their lasting credit, told him to back off. Noise not only confers power; it is silenced by power. As anti-noise activists are quick to point out, the traditional noise ordinance has usually been aimed at and enforced against the individual. The kid with the boom box is one thing; the Federal Aviation Administration, which virtually regulates itself, is quite another. Indeed, the most effective noise ordinances I've found were gag agreements imposed as "compromises" on the critics of noise-making companies: in exchange for ninety "mufflered

lays" at the auto racetrack, your citizens' group will hereby withdraw its litigation; in exchange for an offer to purchase your soon-to-be-worthless house, you agree not to oppose the permit application of our soon-to-be-opened quarry. Ronald Reagan's shutting down of the Office of Noise Abatement and Control in 1982 and the failure of any president since to reopen it may go down as the most effective "noise ordinance" in American history. At the time there were 1,100 local and state programs monitoring noise; now there are about 20. Has anybody ever said, "Turn that damn thing off!" with greater success? One should always be wary, then, of equating quiet and silence. In the politics of quiet and noise, silence sides with the winner.

"I shall shortly be moving elsewhere," Seneca writes at the end of his essay on noise. "Why should I need to suffer the torture any longer than I want to…" Then, as now, stoic resignation was good, but an aggressive realtor was even better. From the first wheel that rattled through the streets of Sumer, the story of noise has always been tied to the story of human mobility — not least of all in America, arguably the world's first nomadic civilization. If there are any fundamental principles to the relationship between noise and mobility, I can discern at least two. The first and simplest goes like this: People move to escape noise, and by moving they always find it.

THE STORY OF NOISE IS TIED TO THE STORY OF HUMAN MOBILITY. PEOPLE MOVE TO ESCAPE NOISE, AND BY MOVING THEY ALWAYS FIND IT

Forty years ago the poet Galway Kinnell came to northeastern Vermont looking for "a house with a view at the end of a long dirt road" that he could buy for $800. Outside the somewhat haggard village of Sheffield he found what he was looking for, or the closest approximation: a fallen-in farmhouse with broken windows and missing doors, which during Kinnell's earliest visits he shared with a pair of porcupines and a weasel. "Living out of reach of human activity," close to wild animals but within hearing of "the accent and pleasure of words, the love of getting things right" that Kinnell says "was more true of old-time Vermonters than any other people I know," the poet also found the materials for his work. And he found quiet, measurably more quiet on a summer evening than the sound of a human whisper, enough to live what he refers to as "an objectification … of my inner life." Of course, the danger in objectifying your inner life is that someone might drive a bulldozer over your heart.

The bulldozer arrived two years ago to clear-cut a nearby tract of land for the site of a South African–owned granite quarry. For many in town the appearance of the South Africans in Sheffield held a promise of jobs, tax revenues, and royalties, perhaps a less obscure place on the map. Kinnell had a different view. Fearful of what the newcomers might do to the landscape and suspicious of what they might have done to other landscapes and villages beforehand, he and a handful of like-minded neighbors opposed the quarry company's application for an environmental permit. Kinnell has already begun to hear the noise of blasting and heavy equipment in the distance and fears that he will soon see giant grout piles rising where he now sees nothing but trees and the chimney smoke of a few isolated neighbors.

About a year ago I began to follow the permitting process, which included a contested noise demonstration and a hilarious soggy trek through cedar swamp with lawyers wearing inappropriate shoes. The process held a special fascination for me, in part because Kinnell had seemed to be living the same dream that brought me to live in a town just one ridge over from his and was now living the nightmare that always dogs such a dream. I, too, count moose and bear among my nearest neighbors. I can see virtually every star one is able to see in the northern hemisphere. In the stillest hours of the early morning, Adam in his Garden has little over me. "It's so quiet here," say my guests from New Jersey. "So peaceful."

And so vulnerable. Quiet, after all, is the most assailable form of wealth. The same thief can forever be stealing it. It can grow back in a moment's respite, like the liver of Prometheus, only to be devoured by the screaming eagles once again. To tell a truth I seldom admit, sometimes I feel most at peace when I

MANY OF THE PEOPLE IN THE ANTI-NOISE CAMPAIGNS HAD MOVED FROM A NOISIER PLACE TO A QUIETER, ONLY TO HAVE THAT QUIETER PLACE GROW LOUD

am seated on the porch of my in-laws' house in a blue-collar town in New Jersey, watching the kids play on the sidewalk and listening to the manhole cover tap amiably under the frequent traffic. Everything is settled there: I mean all the land and all the possibilities that haunt you when you're tempted to believe that your world extends as far as you can see and hear.

All of this is to locate the psychological place from which I began my exploration of quiet and noise. Like most quests, it began with "a passing sight," a disturbing image that one cannot easily suppress. Mine was the sight of Galway Kinnell's face when an environmental board member asked him, somewhere on the dirt road that led to the quarry, "Now, where is your house, Mr. Kinnell?" He turned and pointed toward a hill, several miles across an open field, with an obliging smile and the eyes of someone who has realized for the first time that he can die.

Again and again, the people I found in the forefront of some anti-noise campaign were individuals who had moved from a noisier place to a quieter, only to have that quieter place grow loud. When Jane Moore came to Jerome, Arizona, some twenty-eight years ago, it was practically a ghost town. Formerly the site of a booming copper mine and home to 15,000 people, it was then a cluster of mostly abandoned buildings on either side of a desert highway. Moore was among the artists and squatters who began taking up residence next door to the few locals who had managed somehow to hang on. It was a place of steep canyons and weird acoustics: a clack of pool balls or a wind chime's jangle sounding in unexpected corners like the traces of restless spirits. For Moore, who had grown up next to a freight switching yard in Chicago, five miles away from O'Hare Airport, this was the place of quiet ambience she had always been searching for. She may find herself searching again. There are presently about 350 adults in Jerome, including three police officers. On some weekends as many as 500 motorcycles pass through town, many sporting "modified" exhaust pipes that together with the terrain amplify the thunder of their descent through the canyon. A favorite stop is a rock-and-roll bar in town called The Spirit Room. Vice Mayor Moore and her associates in town government are attempting to pass a noise ordinance; the Modified Motorcycle Association of Arizona has promised that any such law will not go unchallenged. Bikers made the same point by driving into town one weekend and filling it with the modified sound of their presence.

There's an implicit cultural symbolism in conflicts such as this, none more pronounced than what I found in the ongoing feud between the New Hampshire International Speedway in the working-class town of Louden and the residents of scenic Canterbury, home to the "most intact and authentic of all Shaker villages" in America. The countryside and much of the architecture around Canterbury are about as arcadian and colonial as one could imagine. Some 1,800 of the original 3,000-acre Shaker holdings, roughly 700 owned by the Shaker museum itself and the rest owned privately, are all under conservation easement. The tranquillity of the place would seem to be "secured," established, unassailable. But on major race weekends—as opposed to ordinary race weekends, which are virtually every weekend from April to October—the noise of 450-horsepower stock cars in neighboring Louden can reach the decibel level of jet planes. Standing in the front yard of a Canterbury residence, one sound expert measured noise levels as high as 85 decibels, roughly the same level as a lawn mower heard from six feet—this coming from a source half a mile away. For Hillary Nelson, who moved from New York to Canterbury with her husband, such noise is an attack on her quality of life. To many of the people in Louden, who have received tax revenues, a new ball field, a new fire engine, and $50,000 a year in college scholarships from the racetrack, noise is what you pay for quality of life.

In both Louden and Jerome, the source of the offending noise grew from a smaller, preexisting source of tolerable noise. As long as anyone can remember, there has been a biker bar in Jerome and a racetrack in Louden. What

s more, by all accounts the patrons of both of these earlier establishments, though fewer, were wilder than the people who frequent them now. As the Noise Pollution Clearinghouse's Les Blomberg explained to me, one of the most frequent arguments made against those bothered by noise is that the offending noise source "was always there." The Sheffield quarry is being touted as a "reopening" of a pick-and-shovel operation that once extracted granite on the site. The Amcast plant in Cedarburg, Wisconsin, a large foundry that also has been at the center of a noise dispute with some of its neighbors, expanded from a small munitions plant during the Second World War to a major supplier of castings for the automobile industry. In each of these cases the disingenuous argument of "prior occupancy" is accompanied by avowals and sometimes even by hard evidence that the noisy party is trying, somewhat, to be "a good neighbor." Amcast, for instance, spent an estimated $400,000 in an attempt to make its foundry quieter, and seems to have succeeded. Even his critics credit racetrack owner Bob Bahre with running an orderly operation that caters to a "family" clientele. Likewise, the owner of The Spirit Room bar is known to his patrons and to those who'd just as soon see his patrons spirited away for urging bikers not to rev their engines in town. Nevertheless, the thought of a 90,000-seat NASCAR track being "a good neighbor" to a rural village, or 500 motorcyclists becoming good neighbors to a town of 400, is something like the thought of King Kong being a good lover to Fay Wray. It may be sincere, it may even be noble, but if you're the one gripped in the big hairy paw it can only feel obscene.

The subject of noise and scale is of particular interest given the value we now place on cultural and biological "diversity." The soundscape provides both an example of diversity and an instructive analogy to other domains. A smaller sound can coexist with a number of other smaller sounds, but even a number of smaller sounds cannot coexist with one big noise. Never mind the forest—if a baby falls during a rock concert, does it make a sound? Different forms of the same question can be applied to species, languages, and ways of life. Those who dismiss the noise issue as "merely aesthetic" are, of course, ignoring the well-documented medical and psychological effects of noise. They are also forgetting that, in the context of relationships, aesthetics can become ethics.

The other thing that interests me about noise disputes is the way in which class conflict informs them, or seems to inform them. Of course it was no surprise to learn that a poorer life is frequently a noisier one, that those with low incomes are more likely to suffer from noise than the affluent, more likely to work next to the motor, more likely to live next to the airport, more likely to rent the apartment lower down and with thinner walls. But controversies between communities and a noisy industry are likely to pit neighbor against worker, at least in the eyes of the worker, who may tend to see the neighbor as someone with a good job who doesn't mind threatening someone else's job. This was certainly my impression when I was hanging out with the half dozen Sheffield quarry workers while environmental experts, lawyers, and those with "party status" made their inspections of the site. "Maybe we'll get lucky and the whole bunch of them will fall into a hole," said a young equipment operator. Certain supporters of the quarry were quick to frame the issue as a conflict between the interests of the poet on the hill and those of the peon in the valley, between people who had come from elsewhere with money in their pockets and those who'd lived in the area all their lives with none. This is an old and bitter distinction in my neck of the woods, and one not without relevance to the politics of noise and quiet. When I first moved to "the north country," I often wondered why some of the men I talked to spoke so loud, until I realized that they had been partially deafened by millwork, chain saws, and tractors. I imagine that to many of these men, the idea of someone with an indoor job or a university education being sensitive to noise amounts to something like a personal insult, like holding your nose at the smell of your baggage carrier's sweat. And to approach things from the other side, I also imagine that certain displays of noise are intended as per-

A POORER LIFE IS FREQUENTLY A NOISIER ONE. THOSE WITH LOW INCOMES ARE MORE LIKELY TO WORK NEXT TO THE MOTOR AND LIVE NEXT TO THE AIRPORT



THESE DAYS A NEW HARLEY CAN COST NEARLY $20,000, AND THE TYPICAL "BIKER" IS AN INVESTMENT BROKER GETTING IN TOUCH WITH HIS PRIMAL SIDE



sonal insults. Power in the hinterlands grows not only out of the barrel of a gun but also out of the barrel of an exhaust pipe and anything else that makes a good loud bang. Class warfare can come down to a war of sensibility: Fuck with me and I'll park something big and ugly across from your breakfast nook. Piss me off and I'll teach it to sing.

But the relationship between noise and class could be more peculiar than I supposed, and this became clearer in the case of recreational as opposed to occupational noise. What I discovered was how often the appearance of class struggle was manipulated to stereotype a dispute and how often that appearance was deceiving. That fracas over motorcycles in Jerome: obviously a fight between working-class guys having a little fun on the weekend and a bunch of potters and weavers living off trust funds, right? Not exactly. If you're looking for Marlon Brando, he ain't here. These days a new Harley-Davidson can cost nearly $20,000, and the typical "biker" in Jerome is an anesthesiologist or investment broker from Flagstaff getting in touch with his primal side. As for the track in Louden, a third of those who attend its NASCAR races have incomes of over $40,000 a year, and the drivers themselves need a hundred grand just to get a car ready for the track.

"They try to shape the battle into good old regular folks who like racing and these rich eggheads up on the hill," Hillary Nelson complains, and Bob Bahre was indeed quoted in the newspaper as saying that the sixteen Canterbury residents who had appealed a court ruling allowing him to expand his stadium capacity were "all wealthy people" who "just don't care about anybody else." This may not be as hypocritical a statement as it first seems; Bahre grew up on a hardscrabble farm, raced stock cars when the sport was strictly blue-collar in New England, and pretty marginal at that, and is still known for joining his cleanup crew in picking up litter off the race grounds. At some level, the Canterbury sixteen, who included a nurse, a salesman, and a musician, probably *did* seem like "the wealthy" to him. The fact remains that the money, the power, and the noise are on his side.

Back in Sheffield, I found myself taking the same second look. The "elitists" allied with Kinnell included two trailer folk who eke a subsistence living from the land, the sort of people who never count when small-town populists wax eloquent about "the people." The self-appointed defender of South African enterprise and local common sense who wrote letters to the newspaper identifying himself with the "peasants" against the "elitists" from outside was a transplant from New Jersey. The "native Vermonter" who complained about those people "who say, 'We've been to New York, we've had all the benefits of New York, but we don't want you to have them,'" had children with degrees from Stanford and Tufts—which doesn't exactly discredit her point of view but does suggest that the New York types have been a bit lax of late in maintaining their choke hold on cultural advantages. I became suspicious of any easy alignment of quiet and noise with privilege and deprivation. And I found that my own sentiments on the issue could shift as suddenly as sound on a windy day.

One Friday I followed the winding road out of Canterbury and abruptly found myself at the crowded intersection of the main highway through Louden at the start of a Winston Cup weekend. Entering a line of traffic that recalled evacuation scenes in disaster movies, I thought how stock-car racing could stand for everything I find distasteful in American civilization: the needless noise, the ubiquitous advertising, the waste of resources, the risking of human life for "special effect," the primacy of all things Caucasian and masculine, the out-of-shape motor culture's cherished belief that the best form of contact sport is one in which an athlete's buttocks make prolonged contact with a foam seat, the taking over of what was once the domain of inventive amateurs by the all-hallowed "pro" and his all-but-professional fans. I stopped to talk with one young enthusiast in the parking lot of an ice cream stand near the track. "What if they could make race cars quieter?" I asked him. "Would you go for that?" With the beatific smirk of a street evangelist declaring to every passerby that "God is love," he told me, "Noise is good."

But as I approached the track itself, I was not insensible of a certain magnificence, of the stadium rising like an immense, elliptical cathedral out of a sprawling metropolis of RVs and white billowing pavilions such as one might have seen at a jousting tournament. Carloads and truckloads of the faithful streamed in from the highway to pay homage to a Yankee farmboy's dream of building a world-class racetrack and a Tennessee farmboy's dream of being able to harness enough horsepower to outrun every revenuer on the road. Hundreds of banners proclaimed his victory, checkered flags and beer brands blazoned on every one, like lilies and crosses on Easter. Mister, you want to talk about myths and civilizations and the growth of ancient cities—this is our myth and our city, and we build it in two days, more than a hundred thousand of us in a swirling blur like pilgrims circling the Ka'ba, exulting—as another race fan puts it—"in the rev and the roar."

MIGHT SOME OF THE SOUND ASSAILING US BE A PROTEST AGAINST CULTURAL OR ECONOMIC EXTINCTION? "I MAKE NOISE, THEREFORE I AM

I stopped counting after the third or fourth anti-noise activist told me that "noise pollution will be the secondhand smoke issue of the new century." I ought to have been happy to hear it. To say that I resent noise even more than I resent cigarette smoke is to say that I resent it very much. And yet I couldn't hear the comparison between noise pollution and secondhand smoke without wincing. Maybe I detect in the campaign against noise, as in the campaign against smoking, a flavor of that ruthless "progressivism" that first manifested itself when families of Neanderthals began to disappear oh so mysteriously from among their Cro-Magnon neighbors. "Must be the evolution," said the others, shifting their feet and whistling. As our society moves from a manufacturing base to an "information base," and as more and more blue-collar workers put on the livery of the service sector, is it any surprise that we should find our old machinery too noisy and the vices of those who tend it too intolerable, that we should demand our servants keep their voices down (like that Roman master so infuriated by unexpected noises that he had his slave thrown into a pond of lampreys for accidentally dropping a tray of crystal glasses) and take their nasty habits outside, while indoors we fuss to attain the perfect funereal quiet of an online chat room?

Might at least some of the noise assailing us amount to a protest against the threat of cultural or economic extinction? "I make noise, therefore I am." The Hispanic gardeners who recently went on a hunger strike to protest an L.A. ban on leaf-blowers said that the law was aimed at their race. In effect, they were saying that a noise *identified* them; silencing it was an attack on them. In a similar vein: "To everybody who told me I'd go nowhere in life: I can't hear you." That's a Sony advertisement for a car stereo system that cranks out sound at 164 decibels, loud enough to kill fish, but it easily could serve as the slogan for a generation that is not so much lost as unclaimed. Maybe the best way to fight the Boomers is with something that booms.

I wonder, too, if some of our antipathy toward noise isn't the negative form of our totalitarian consumerism, the belief that we ought to be able, as though by divine right, to achieve complete satisfaction of our every distaste no less than of our every desire. And will the ear ultimately lead the eye to more refined levels of fastidiousness? My interest in noise ordinances took me to an affluent New Jersey suburb where "hawkers, peddlers, and vendors," as well as "yelling, shouting, whistling, or singing on the public streets," are all prohibited by statute and where hanging up wash on an outdoor clothesline is prohibited by custom. It's funny to imagine that any people on earth, much less well-to-do people in the wealthiest nation on earth, would deny themselves or their neighbors the inestimable luxury of making love on sun-dried, wind-kissed sheets, or the wistful hope of some enchanted morning coming upon a peddler. If you met Humphrey Bogart in heaven, would you ask him to put out his cigarette? If you get to heaven at all, will you ask them to turn down the choir?

"The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him."

WE WANT NOISE AND QUIET, UTTER FREEDOM *AND* INNER PEACE. WE WANT TO PRACTICE ZEN BUT MAINLY IN THE ART OF MOTORCYCLE MAINTENANCE

But this too: "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth."

I hate noise as much as anyone I know, and I can flatter myself with the names of others in history who hated it, too: Darwin, Proust, Goethe, Poe, Haydn, Chekhov. Recent studies tend to confirm Schopenhauer's hunch: "I have for a long time been of the opinion that the quantity of noise anyone can comfortably endure is in inverse proportion to his mental powers. . . ." But I cannot forget that in addition to hating noise Schopenhauer hated the fact that he'd been born (and Poe felt that the most inspiring women were, shall we say, the extremely quiet kind). The connections worry me.

I would never want to forget what Thoreau said about the train: "when I hear the iron horse make the hills echo with his snort like thunder, shaking the earth with his feet . . . it seems as if the earth had got a race now worthy to inhabit it." Or what James Agee said about the importance of playing Beethoven *loud*. I agree wholeheartedly with the motto of the Noise Pollution Clearinghouse, "Good Neighbors Keep Their Noise to Themselves," and I try my best to practice it, but something else in me wants to cry, "Aw, go ahead" when Bob Marley sings,

> I want to disturb my neighbor
> Cause I'm feeling so right
> I want to turn up my disco
> Blow them to full watts tonight

True, whenever I take overnight accommodations, I always ask first if there are any wedding parties or traveling sports teams likely to "blow them to full watts" in the rooms nearby; yet few scenes in literature delight me as much as the one in Robertson Davies's *Fifth Business*, in which an anonymous Spaniard, having complained the night before about a row he mistakes for a boisterous honeymoon ("very well for you, señor," he calls through the door, "but please to remember there are zose below you who are not so young"), leaves flowers and this message at the door the next day: "Forgive my ill manners of last night. Love conquers all and youth must be served. May you know a hundred years of happy nights. Your Neighbour in the Chamber below."

To all of this, I have no doubt, many anti-noise activists would say, "We love these sounds no less than you. The problem is that every single one of them, Agee's quaint phonograph and Thoreau's equally quaint train, the joyful noise and the rub-a-dub style, is being overpowered by the boom car and the air horn, by a cacophony that is literally making us deaf" (and that Canadian noise expert Winston Sydenborgh estimates is doubling worldwide every ten years). Blake said, "No bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings," but we are dealing now with the dark raptors of limitless amplification. Point granted. It was that secondhand smoke business that got to me, I guess. It was talking with Paul Miluski, the soon-to-be-without-his-lease owner of The Spirit Room biker bar in Jerome, whom I liked instantly, as I would have to like any man who plays croquet on a rooftop. Robert Frost said that he needed the poor for his work; I need a few Paul Miluskis for mine. And if they do not make at least some noise, how shall I know where to find them?

My noisy self-contradictions are very American, of course. Being an American is about living in contradiction, if it is about anything, because the glory and the tragedy of America come from our insatiable desire always to have the best of both worlds. That includes the worlds of noise and quiet, of utter freedom and inner peace. We want our own backyard version of the cloistered walk and our own Promethean stereo system as well. We want to practice Zen but mainly in the art of motorcycle maintenance. The purists, those who register one impulse or another as an enthusiasm and an allegiance rather than both impulses together as a complex form of yearning, are meeting now on the shrinking landscape and, perhaps more significantly, in the soundscape. Like radio stations on a crowded dial, their frequencies clash at certain bends in the road.

I actually take this meeting as a hopeful sign in that both of these impulses are essentially apolitical; that is, they both tend to express themselves against the quotidian sounds of the *polis*. Whether you choose to follow Huckleberry Finn or the Buddha, you always start by lighting out for the territories. Perhaps the exuberant noisemaker and the quiet seeker will discover that they are natural allies in spite of themselves, because each will of necessity have to appeal to the very sense of public domain and public life that once seemed anathema to their desires. To preserve either liberty or tranquillity against the passion of the other's counterclaim, one must in the end circle back to a rational discussion at the city gates.

The other reason I can take hope from the noise issue is its ability to penetrate and subvert political positions just as sound can penetrate—and, given the right Jericho, break down—a wall. Where would you locate the right and left wings of the noise pollution issue, for instance? Everywhere and nowhere. You can see noise as a threat to the most basic principles of private property, hearth and home. In other words, you can see noise as a threat to all those things that ought to be most dear to the conservative heart. Or you can see noise pollution as a threat to "the commons," an allusion frequently made by Les Blomberg and others in the anti-noise movement to the doomed English practice of preserving some common ground for community grazing. The soundscape is self-evidently property that no one owns, or rather that all of us own together. If it is possible to construct a "unified field theory" for our conflicting political currents, might it be found there? And if we could establish an ethic for sharing the soundscape, might that in turn pull us—by the ear, so to speak—to an ethic for sharing other forms of wealth? If any of these hopes is well founded, it may rest on nothing more sophisticated than the old wisdom of old neighborhoods, which says that the only sure way to hold a loud party without complaints from the neighbors, and with some hope of sleeping late and quietly the next day, is to invite all the neighbors to the party.

My hopes are probably not well founded, however. As we divide our world more ruthlessly into rich and poor, and the countryside into what Wendell Berry calls "defeated landscapes and victorious (but threatened) landscapes," it is probable that we will do the same thing in regard to sound. Many of us will live in pandemonium, and a few of us will have the means to live in paradise. The permeability of the soundscape may yet teach us to recognize the flaw in that arrangement, but we are likely to interpret the warning alarm as no more than a call to move elsewhere. Most of us will continue to put our faith in our mobility, in being able to run from the noise to someplace quieter. Like our pre-human ancestors, we still respond to noise with a fight-or-flight response, which at our stage of development means weighing the relative costs of the lawyer and the realtor.

Of course, the irony of flight is the sound of flight itself. By far the largest number of noise complaints in this country have to do with modes of transportation, highway noise first of all, airport noise after that. Earlier I said that the first of two principles governing the relationship between mobility and noise is that people move to escape noise, and by moving they find it. The second principle is that people move to escape noise, and by moving they make it.

Along with fight and flight is there not a third ingrained response to the overwhelming power of noise, which is to fawn, to assume the position of joining what we cannot beat? So those who cherish quiet we dismiss as failed stoics, which may mean nothing more than that we are resigned to being cynics. In any case, I have begun to notice a curious thing about noise, which is how the pursuits disturbed or destroyed by it—pursuits such as writing a poem, watching a bird, or even looking after a child—can be made to sound so insignificant precisely because they make so little sound. Hillary Nelson told me of a day when her three-year-old son fell and hurt himself in her front yard, but she could not hear him crying over the drone of the race cars in Louden. I suspect that many will

MOST OF US WILL CONTINUE TO PUT OUR FAITH IN OUR MOBILITY, IN BEING ABLE TO RUN FROM THE NOISE TO SOMEPLACE QUIETER



THE NOISE WE MAKE IS AN ANONYMOUS CHAIN LETTER THAT WE MAIL OUT EVERY DAY AND THAT COMES BACK WITH INTEREST SOONER OR LATER

be as deaf to her complaint as she was to his cry. Kids fall all the time, right? From Jerome, Jane Moore wrote me a letter about a friend who moved out of town because she was dying of cancer and the motorcycle noise was making the process more painful. And I imagined the same cynical voice responding, "Let me get this straight. You need quiet to die?"

Actually, the time may be coming when you will not even need quiet to be dead. A German media artist who finds the notion of a quiet grave "idiotic" has recently created an exhibit of vocal tombstones, one of which "moans lustfully" when stroked. I find myself thinking about the moaning tombstone whenever someone tells me, with a faith so innocent it can bring tears to your eyes, how Technology (invoked with a capital *T*) is going to be our solution to the noise problem. Of course it can be, with marvelous results. In Europe, where noise reduction has a much higher place on the political agenda than it does here, roads are being built that reduce traffic noise by as much as 70 percent. Even the Harleys exported to Europe are designed to run quieter and, as an unintended result of such tinkering, turn out to have even more horsepower than their hoggish American cousins. Mechanical noise, after all, is an inefficient loss of energy (though many American consumers still equate louder volume with higher performance). So it is sometimes possible, with a little know-how, to have the best of both worlds. But for every noise we quiet, we produce another. Most of all, we continue to produce a false sense of virtual quiet by distancing ourselves from the actual noise we make. This is the ultimate form of "civilized" mobility: the removal of my actions from their effects. I don't have to hear the printing presses that publish my words, the strip-mining equipment that feeds my computer. I'm a writer, you see. I practice a quiet occupation. Technology has carried that old suspicious adage about not shitting where you eat to a place perilously above suspicion, where highly intelligent people are capable of believing that they don't even shit where they shit. When I tried to suggest as much to some of the movers and shakers in the noise movement—for instance, to the consultant for an airport-noise group who told me that he logs 75,000 flight miles a year in his work—the response I got was often a bit chilly. Perhaps this was due to the understandable fear that someone already in danger of being branded a crank might also be branded a Luddite. But perhaps it rather had to do with a deal already struck with the successful manufacture of the first mud brick some nine or ten millennia ago. As the consultant told me, "The absolutist approach [i.e., the one I had just proposed to him] says we must change the way we live . . . but no one's going to stop the growth of airlines. Why tilt at windmills you can't defeat? I wouldn't want to stop the evolution of our science, even though there are going to be losers."

So in the end the most raucous disturbance of the peace (or the most cynical response to the complaints of those disturbed) may be nothing else but the brazen form of a more discreet and universal communication, the signed version of an anonymous chain letter that the rest of us mail out every day and that comes back with interest to everybody's mailbox sooner or later. (And sooner than later will be able to announce its arrival by moaning lustfully.) When this essay is done, for example, I will send it to New York City overnight mail because it absolutely positively has to be there, and because the other pursuits of my have-it-all life will undoubtedly push the project too close to its deadline. Overnight mail is only possible with overnight flight, which has made no small contribution to the 2,156 percent increase in air-cargo traffic since 1960. Sometime in the night the plane carrying my little meditation on noise will fly over someone's roof, waking her or her aged father or her colicky three-month-old from a sound sleep. Wrapping her robe furiously around herself, perhaps going so far as to light a cigarette with her trembling fingers, she will curse that plane, and, to some small degree that I cannot gauge and can never hear, she will be cursing me. And those cranky old gods of Sumer and Uruk, long since deaf if not dead, will do no more than I will to help. ■

THE CASE AGAINST HENRY KISSINGER

PART TWO

Crimes against humanity

By Christopher Hitchens

On the twentieth of December 2000, as the first part of this article was being readied for publication, we contacted Henry Kissinger's office, stipulating our areas of interest and requesting an interview. Receiving no direct response from him, we wrote again and graciously offered to match the usual sultanlike fee that he charges for making pronouncements. This elicited only a pompous letter from a hireling, and we were left to assume that there are some subjects Kissinger prefers not to discuss, not even for ready money.

Whether or not their perpetrator cares to comment on them, the crimes discussed in Part I—the havoc visited on Indochinese civilians, the illegal subversion practiced on Chilean democracy—did in fact occur, and they set the tone for the remainder of his time in office. The murder of General René Schneider was soon eclipsed by more, and more gross, atrocities in Chile and the Southern Hemisphere. And the same paw print of unchecked power was to be found in Cyprus and Greece, in Bangladesh and East Timor, in the succeeding years. These are not, as is too often argued, the results of geopolitical forces for which no one is to blame. They are crimes for which Henry Kissinger is, and should be held, responsible, and they vividly insist on an accounting.

CHILE (PART II): DEATH IN THE SOUTH

On November 9, 1970, Henry Kissinger authored National Security Council Decision Memorandum 93, which reviewed policy toward Chile in the immediate wake of Salvador Allende's confirmation as president. Various routine measures of economic harassment were proposed (as per Nixon's instruction to "make the economy scream"), with cutoffs in aid and investment. More significantly, Kissinger advocated that "close relations" be maintained with military leaders in neighboring countries, in order to facilitate both the coordination of pressure against Chile and the incubation of opposition within the country. In outline, this prefigures the disclosures that have since been made about Operation "Condor," a secret collusion among military dictatorships across the hemisphere, operated with the United States government's knowledge and indulgence.

The actual overthrow of the Allende government in a sanguinary coup d'état took place on September 11, 1973, while Kissinger was going through his own Senate confirmation process as secretary of state. He falsely assured the Foreign Relations Committee that the United States government had played no part in the coup. From a thesaurus of hard information to the contrary, one might select Situation Report No. 2, from the Navy Section of the United States Military Group in Chile and written by U.S. Naval Attaché Patrick J. Ryan. Mr. Ryan describes his close relationship with the officers engaged in overthrowing the government, hails September 11, 1973, as "our D-Day," and observes with satisfaction that Chile's coup d'état [sic] was close to perfect." Or one may peruse the declassified [illegible] Project HUELLA"—the code name under which the CIA, in frequent contact with Kissinger and the 40

Christopher Hitchens, formerly Washington editor of Harper's Magazine, *is the author of books on the Cyprus crisis, Kurdistan, Palestine, and the Anglo-American connection. His [illegible]*

Committee, conducted covert operations against the democratically elected government of Chile.

What is startling, and what points to a much more direct complicity in individual crimes against humanity, is the microscopic detail in which Kissinger kept himself informed, after the coup, of Augusto Pinochet's atrocities. On November 16, Assistant Secretary of State Jack B. Kubisch delivered a detailed report on the Chilean junta's execution policy, which, as he notes to the new secretary, "you requested by cable from Tokyo." The memo goes on to enlighten Kissinger in various ways about the first nineteen days of Pinochet's rule. Summary executions during that period, we are told, totaled 320. (This contrasts with the publicly announced total of 100 and is based on "an internal, confidential report prepared for the junta" to which American officials are evidently privy.) Looking on the bright side,

> On November 14 we announced [illegible] of Credit to Chile [illegible] $24 million for feed grains. Our long-standing commitment to sell two surplus destroyers to the Chileans may be met in reasonably sympathetic response to Senate consultations. The Chileans, meanwhile, have sent us several new requests for controversial military equipment.

Kubisch then raises the awkward question of two American citizens murdered by the junta—Frank Teruggi and Charles Horman—details of whose precise fate are still, more than a quarter century later, being sought by their families. The reason for the length of the search may be inferred from a telegram, dated February 11, 1974, which reports on a meeting with the junta's foreign minister and notes that Kubisch raises the matter of the missing Americans "[illegible] SEE [illegible] SEEK [illegible] SEEK [illegible] SEEK



AFTERMATH OF THE CAR BOMBING THAT KILLED ORLANDO LETELIER AND RONNI MOFFITT, WASHINGTON, D.C., 1976

The foregoing passages are worth bearing in mind. It is a good key for decoding the usual relationship between fact and falsehood in Kissinger's self-centered memoir. (And it is a huge reproach to his editors at Simon & Schuster and Weidenfeld & Nicolson.) It should also act as an urgent prompting to members of Congress, and to human-rights organizations, to reopen the incomplete inquiries and thwarted investigations into the multifarious crimes of this period. Finally, and read in the light of Chile's return to democracy, and the decision of the Chilean courts to pursue truth and justice, it repudiates Kissinger's patronizing insult concerning the "irresponsibility" of a dignified and humane people, who have outlived their cruel, more than evil, adulterer by a decade.

A rule of thumb in Washington holds that any late disclosure by officialdom will contain material that is worse than even the crime suspected. In September 1[illegible], however, the CIA disgorged the contents of an internal inquiry on Chile, which had been required of it by the Hinchey Amendment to the Intelligence Authorization Act of [illegible]. And the most hardened conspiracy theorists were reduced to amazement.

Support for Coup in 1970. [illegible] the strategy, CIA sought to instigate a coup to prevent Allende [illegible] by the Congress. The plot [illegible] driver, the General [illegible] Constitutionally required because he did not win [illegible]

nicles, without provoking a reaction in the U.S. which would lead to deteriorative reaction." This speech was aimed at Chile. I wanted to tell you about this. My evaluation is that you are a victim of all left-wing groups around the world and that your protest-march was that a government that was [illegible] Communist.

The Memcon: As Secretary of State, I felt I had the responsibility to encourage the Chilean government in the direction of greater democracy through a policy of understanding Pinochet's concerns. . . . Pinochet reminded me that "Russia supports their people 100 percent. We are behind you. You are the leader. But you have a punitive system for your friends." I returned to my underlying theme that any major help from us would realistically depend on progress on human rights.

The Memcon: There is merit in what you say. It is a curious time in the U.S. . . . It is unfortunate. We have been through Viet Nam and Watergate. We have to wait until the [1976] election. We welcomed the overthrow of the Communist-inclined government here. We are not out to weaken your position.

In an unpleasant way, Pinochet twice mentioned the name of Orlando Letelier, the exiled Chilean opposition leader, accusing him of misleading the United States Congress. Kissinger's response, as can be seen, was to apologize for the Congress and (in a minor replay of his 1968 Paris tactic over Vietnam) to suggest that the dictator hope for better days after the upcoming elections. Three months later, a car bomb in Washington killed Letelier, the only such outrage ever committed in the nation's capital by agents of a foreign regime (and an incident completely absent from Kissinger's memoirs). The man responsible for arranging the crime, the Chilean secret policeman General Manuel Contreras, has since stated in an affidavit that he took no action without specific and personal orders from Pinochet. He remains in prison, doubtless wondering why he trusted his superiors.

"I want to see our relations and friendship improve," Kissinger told Pinochet (but not the readers of his memoirs). "We want to help, not undermine you." In advising a murderer and despot, whose rule he had helped impose, to disregard his upcoming remarks as a sop to Congress, Kissinger insulted democracy in both countries. He also gave the greenest of green lights to further cross-border and internal terrorism, neither of which could have been unknown to him. (In his memoirs, he does mention what he calls Pinochet's "counterterrorist intelligence agency.") Further colluding with Pinochet against the United States Congress, which was considering curtailment of arms sales to human-rights violators via the Kennedy Amendment, Kissinger also [illegible]

I don't have a [illegible] You have a [illegible] Watergate. [illegible] it we let it we will [illegible] I don't [illegible]

[illegible] were working with three dif[illegible] groups. All three groups made it [illegible] would be part the kidnapping of [illegible] for René Schneider, who felt deeply [illegible] constitutionalist that the Army allow [illegible] to remain power. CIA agreed with that as [illegible] although CIA provided weapons to one [illegible] group, we have found no information that the plotters' or CIA's intention was for the general to be killed. Contact with one group of plotters was stopped early on because of its extremist tendencies. CIA provided [illegible] submachine guns and ammunition to the second group, mortally wounding him in the attack. CIA had previously encouraged the group to launch a coup but withdrew support four days before the attack because, in CIA's assessment, the group could not carry it out successfully.

This repeats the old canard supposedly distinguishing a kidnapping or abduction from a murder, and once again raises the intriguing question: What was the CIA going to do with General Schneider once it had kidnapped him?[2] (Note, also, the studied passivity whereby the report "found no information that the plotters' or CIA's intention was for the general to be killed." What would satisfy this bizarre criterion?) But then we learn of the supposedly unruly gang that actually took its instructions seriously:

> In [illegible] CIA member of the Arms group who would be [illegible] contacts [illegible] Viaux and to [illegible] information [illegible] and [illegible] of the group. Although [illegible] Viaux [illegible] had [illegible] obligation to the group because it acted on its own, in an effort to keep the [illegible] secret, to maintain the good will of the group and for humanitarian reasons, $35,000 was passed.

"Humanitarian reasons." One has to admire the sheer inventiveness of this explanation. At 1970 prices, $35,000 was, in Chile, a considerable sum. Not lethal, the sort of sum that a local station chief could have disbursed on his own. One wanted to know how the 40 Committee and its flamboyant chairman, Henry Kissinger, decided that the best way to dissociate from a supposedly loose-cannon gang was to pay it a small fortune in cash *after* it had committed a cold-blooded murder.

Henry Kissinger approved the internationalization of the death-squad principle

The same question arises in an even more [illegible] with another disclosure made by the CIA in the course of the same report. This is [illegible] "Relationship with Contreras." Manuel Contreras was the head of Pinochet's secret military police, and in that capacity organized the death, torture, and "disappearance" of innumerable Chileans as well as the use of bombing and assassination techniques as far afield as Washington, D.C. The CIA admits early on in the document that it

> had liaison relationships in Chile with the primary purpose of securing assistance in gathering intelligence on external targets. The CIA offered these services assistance in internal organization and training to combat subversion and terrorism from abroad, not in combating internal opponents of the government.

Such flat prose, based on a distinction between the "external targets" and the more messy business of internal dictatorial discipline, invites the question: What external threat? Chile had no foreign enemy except Argentina, which disputed some sea-lane rights in the Beagle Channel. (In consequence, Chile helped Mrs. Thatcher in the Falklands war of 1982.) And in Argentina, as we know, the CIA was likewise engaged in helping the military regime to survive. No, Chile had no external enemies to speak of, but the Pinochet dictatorship had many, many external foes. They were the numerous Chileans forced to abandon their country. Manuel Contreras's job was to hunt them down. As the report puts it,

> During a period between 1974 and 1977, CIA maintained contact with Manuel Contreras Sepulveda, who later became notorious for his involvement in human rights abuses. The U.S. Government policy community approved CIA's contact with Contreras, given his position as chief of the primary intelligence organization in Chile, as necessary to accomplish the CIA's mission, in spite of concerns that this relationship might lay the CIA open to charges of aiding internal political repression.

After a few bits of back-and-forth about the distinction without a difference (between "external" and "internal" police tactics), the CIA report states candidly,

> By April 1975, intelligence reporting showed that Contreras was the principal obstacle to a reasonable human rights policy within the Junta, but an interagency committee directed the CIA to continue its relationship with Contreras. The U.S. Ambassador to Chile urged Deputy Director of Central Intelligence [General Vernon] Walters to receive Contreras in Washington in the interest of maintaining good relations with Pinochet. In August 1975, with interagency approval, this meeting took place.
>
> In May and June 1975, elements within the CIA recommended establishing a paid relationship with Contreras to obtain intelligence based on his unique position and access to Pinochet. This proposal was overruled, citing the U.S. Government policy on

[illegible] Harper's Magazine, February 2001, *pages* 53–58

However, given miscommunications in the timing
Contreras.

This does not require
me it had been concluded
it that, that Manuel
val obstacle to a reasonable human rights policy,"
he is given American taxpayers' money and re-
ceived at a high level in Washington. The CIA's
memorandum is careful to state that, where doubts
exist, they are stilled by the "U.S. Government
policy community" and by "an interagency com-
mittee." It also tries to suggest, with unconscious
humor, that the head of a murderous foreign se-
cret service was given a large bribe by mistake.
One wonders who was reprimanded for this blun-
der, and how it got past the scrutiny of the 40
Committee.

The report also contradicts itself, stating at one point that Contreras's activities overseas were opaque and at another that

> tion Condor, an intelligence-sharing arrangement

So now we know: The internationalization of the death-squad principle was understood and approved by American intelligence and its political masters across two administrations. The senior person
was Henry Kissinger. Whichever "interagency committee" is
Committee or the interagency committee on Chile, we are led back to the same source.

On leaving the State Department, Kissinger made an extraordinary bargain whereby he gifted his papers to the Library of Congress (having first hastily trucked them for safekeeping to the Rockefeller estate at Pocantico Hills, New York) on the sole condition that they remain under seal until five years after his death. Kissinger outlived Contreras, however, made a mistake when he killed an American citizen, Ronni Karpen Moffitt, in the Washington car bomb that also murdered Orlando Letelier in 1976. By late 2000, the Federal Bureau of Investigation had finally sought and received subpoena power to review the Library of Congress papers, a subpoena with which Kissinger dealt only through his attorneys. It was a start, but it was pathetic when compared with the efforts of truth-and-justice commissions in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay, which have now emerged from years of Kissinger-befriended dictatorship and are seeking a full accounting. We await the moment when the United States Congress will inaugurate a comparable process and finally subpoena all the hidden documents that obscure the view of unpunished crimes committed in our names.

CYPRUS: A TURBULENT PRIEST



In the second volume of his trilogy of memoirs, *Years of Upheaval*, Henry Kissinger found the subject of the 1974 Cyprus catastrophe so awkward that he decided to postpone con-

> I must leave a full discussion of the Cyprus

This argued a certain nervousness on his part, if only because the subjects of Vietnam, Cambodia, the Middle East, Angola, Chile, China, and the SALT
"unresolved today" and were unresolved then. (To say that these matters "stretched into the Ford Presidency" is to say, in effect, nothing at all except that this pallid interregnum did, historically speaking, occur.)

In most of his writing about himself and, one presumes, in most of his presentations to his clients) Kissinger projects a strong impression of a man at home in the world and on top of his brief. But there are a number of occasions when it suits him to pose as a sort of Candide, naive and ill prepared and easily unhorsed by events. No doubt this pose costs him something in self-

esteem. It is a pose, furthermore, that he often adopts at precisely the time when the record [illegible] how [illegible] to be knowledgeable and when knowledge or foreknowledge would also confront him with charges of responsibility or complicity.

This in 1974 is just such a case. Kissinger now argues, in the third volume of his memoirs, *Years of Renewal*, that he was prevented and distracted, by Watergate and the deliquescence of the Nixon presidency, from taking a timely or informed interest in the crucial triangle of Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus. This is a bizarre disclaimer: the phrase "eastern flank of NATO" was then a geopolitical commonplace of the first importance, and the proximity of Cyprus to the Middle East was a factor never absent from American strategic thinking. There was no reason of domestic policy to prevent the region from engaging his attention. Furthermore, the very implosion of Nixonian authority, cited as a reason for Kissinger's own absence of mind, in fact bestowed extraordinary powers upon him. To restate the obvious once more: When he became secretary of state in 1973, he took care to retain his post as "special assistant to the president for national security affairs," or, as we now say, national security adviser. This made him the first and only secretary of state to hold the chairmanship of the 40 Committee, which, of course, considered and approved covert actions by the CIA. Meanwhile, as chairman of the National Security [illegible] he held a position in which every important intelligence plan passed across his desk. His former NSC aide, Roger Morris, was not exaggerating by much, if at all, when he said that Kissinger's dual position, plus Nixon's eroded one, made him "no less than acting chief of state for national security."



HENRY KISSINGER, PRESIDENT MAKARIOS OF CYPRUS, AND TED KOPPEL, 1974

Kissinger gives one hostage to fortune in *Years of Upheaval* and another in *Years of Renewal*. In the former volume he says, quite plainly: "I had always taken it for granted that the next communal crisis in Cyprus would provoke Turkish intervention"—i.e., would at least risk the prospect of a war within NATO between Greece and Turkey and would certainly involve the partition of the island. That this was indeed common knowledge may not be doubted by any person even lightly acquainted with Cypriot affairs. In the latter volume, wherein Kissinger finally takes up the challenge implicitly refused in the first volume, he repeatedly asks the reader why anyone (such as himself, so burdened with Watergate) would have sought "a crisis in the eastern Mediterranean between two NATO allies."

These two disingenuous statements need to be qualified in the light of a third one, which appears on page 199 of *Years of Renewal*. Here, President Makarios of Cyprus is described without adornment as "the proximate cause of most of Cyprus's tensions." Makarios was the democratically elected leader of a virtually unarmed republic, which was at the time in an association agreement with the European Economic Community, as well as a member of the United Nations and of the Commonwealth. His rule was challenged, and the independence of Cyprus threatened, by a military dictatorship in Athens and a highly militarized government in Turkey, both of which sponsored right-wing gangster organizations on the island, and both of which had plans to annex the greater or lesser part of it. In spite of this, "intercommunal" violence had been on the decline in Cyprus throughout the 1970s. Most killings were, in fact, "intramural": of Greek and Turkish democrats or internationalists by their respective nationalist and authoritarian rivals. Several attempts, by Greek and Greek Cypriot fanatics, had been made on the life of President Makarios himself. To describe his person as the "proximate cause" of most of the tensions is to make a wildly aberrant moral judgment.

This same aberrant judgment, however, supplies the key that unlocks the lie at the heart of Kissinger's chapter. If the elected civilian authority (and spiritual leader of the Greek Orthodox community) is the "proximate cause" of the tensions, then his removal from the scene is self-evidently the cure for them. If one can demonstrate that there was such a removal plan, and that Kissinger knew about it in advance, then it follows logically and naturally that he

Photograph © David Rubinger/CORBIS

was not ostensibly looking for a crisis—as he self-strikingly asks us to disbelieve—but for a solution. The fact that he got a crisis, which was also a hideous calamity for Cyprus and the region, does not change the equation or undo the syllogism. The scheme to remove Makarios, on which the "solution" depended, was in practice a failure. But those who willed the means and wished the ends are not absolved from guilt by the refusal of reality to match their schemes.

It is, from Kissinger's own record and recollection, as well as the subsequent official inquiry, quite easy to demonstrate that he *did* have advance knowledge of the plan to depose and kill Makarios. He admits as much himself, by noting that the Greek dictator Dimitrios Ioannides, head of the secret police, was determined to mount a coup in Cyprus and bring the island under the control of Athens. This was one of the better-known facts of the situation, as was the more embarrassing fact that Brigadier Ioannides was dependent on American military aid and political sympathy. His police state had long since been expelled from the Council of Europe and blocked from joining the EEC, and it was largely the advantage conferred by his agreement to "home port" the U.S. Sixth Fleet, and host a string of U.S. air force and intelligence bases, that kept him in power. This lenient policy was highly controversial in Congress and in the American press, and the argument over it was part of Kissinger's daily bread long before the Watergate drama.

Thus it was understood *in general* that the Greek dictatorship, an American client, wished to see Makarios overthrown and had already tried to kill him or have him killed. (Overthrow and assassination, incidentally, are effectively coterminous in this account; there was no possibility of leaving such a charismatic leader alive, and those who sought his removal invariably intended his death.) This was also understood *in particular*. The most salient proof is this: In May of 1974, two months before the coup in Cyprus's capital, Nicosia, which Kissinger later claimed came as a shock to him, he received a memorandum from the head of his State Department Cyprus desk, Thomas Boyatt. Boyatt summarized all the cumulative and persuasive reasons for believing that a Greek junta attack on Cyprus and Makarios was imminent. He further argued that, in the absence of an American *démarche* to Athens, warning the dictators to desist, it might be assumed that the United States was indifferent to this. And he added what everybody knew: that such a coup, if it went forward, would beyond doubt trigger a Turkish invasion.

Prescient memos are a dime a dozen in Washington after a crisis; they are often then read for the first time [illegible] in order to exonerate [illegible] and fortify a claim to put the best face [illegible] admit that he saw this document [illegible] while engrossed in his shuttle between [illegible] (both of them within half an hour's flying time of Cyprus). Yet no *démarche* bearing his name or carrying his authority was [illegible].

A short while afterward, on June 7, 1974, the *National Intelligence Daily*, which is the [illegible] reading of all senior [illegible] Department, Pentagon, and national security officials, cited an American field report, dated June 3, that stated the views of the dictator to Americ[illegible]:

> Ioannides assumed that Greece [illegible] move with Makarios and that [illegible] counterattack to clear [illegible] and [illegible] was in Greek Cypriot hands [illegible] and quickly the mainland. He [illegible] acquiesced to the removal of Makarios [illegible] . . . Ioannides stated that if Makarios decides on [illegible] to obtain a tactical advantage, he (Ioannides) is not [illegible] remove Makarios once and for all and have Greece [illegible]

This report and its contents were later authenticated before Congress by C.I.A. staff who had served in Athens at the relevant time. The fact that it made Brigadier Ioannides seem bombastic and delusional—both of which he [illegible] should have underlined the [illegible] imminent danger.

At about the same time, Kissinger received a call from Senator J. William Fulbright, the chair-

Nixon's problems made Kissinger "no less than acting chief of state for national security"

man of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Senator Fulbright had been briefed about the impending coup by a senior Greek dissident journalist in Washington named Elias P. Demetracopoulos. According to Demetracopoulos, Fulbright told Kissinger that he [illegible] then to avert the planned Greek action, and he gave three reasons. The first was that it would repair some of the moral damage done by America's indulgence of the junta. The second was that it would head off a confrontation between Greece and Turkey in the Mediterranean. The third was that it would [illegible] American prestige on the island. Kissinger declined to take the recommended steps, on the bizarre grounds that he could not [illegible] Greek "internal af-

[illegible] to a [illegible] the Nixon Administration [illegible] pressure from Senator Henry Jackson to link U.S.-Soviet trade to the free emigration of Russian Jewry. However odd this line [illegible], it still makes it quite impossible for Kissinger to claim, as he still does, that he had had no warning.

So there was still no American high-level concern registered with Athens. The difficulty is sometimes presented as one of protocol or etiquette, as if Kissinger's regular custom was to whisper and tread lightly. Ioannides was the de facto head of the regime but technically only its secret police chief. For the U.S. ambassador, Henry Tasca, it was awkward to make diplomatic approaches to a man he described as "a cop." But again I remind you that Henry Kissinger, in addition to his formal diplomatic eminence, was also head of the 40 Committee, and therefore the supervisor of American covert action, and was dealing in private with an Athens regime that had long-standing ties to the CIA. The 1976 House Committee on Intelligence later phrased the problem rather loftily in its report:

> [illegible] as much by the CIA station chief that [illegible] would not [illegible] dealings with the CIA and not [illegible] the State Department desk officer's [illegible] to express concern over the Greek [illegible]. It is clear, however, that the Embassy [illegible] steps to underscore to Ioannides the depth of U.S. concern over a Cyprus coup attempt. This episode, the exclusive CIA access to Ioannides, [illegible] that he may not have seen all important [illegible] and the CIA station, Ioannides' suggestions of U.S. acquiescence, and Wash-

KISSINGER FAILED TO OFFER CONDOLENCES ON THE REPORTED DEATH OF THE CYPRIOT PRESIDENT

> [illegible] Ioannides chose to [illegible] rapid [illegible] [illegible] other U.S. [illegible] were [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Robert Anderson, flatly denied that the coup—later described by Makarios from the podium of the United Nations as "an invasion"—constituted foreign intervention. "No," he replied to a direct question on this point. "In our view there has been no outside intervention." This surreal position was not contradicted by Kissinger when he met with the Cypriot ambassador and failed to offer the customary condolences on the reported death of his president—the "proximate cause," we now learn from him, of all the unpleasantness. When asked if he still recognized the elected Makarios government as the legal one, Kissinger doggedly and astonishingly refused to answer. When asked if the United States was moving toward recognition of the Sampson regime, his spokesman declined to deny it. When Senator Fulbright helped facilitate a visit by the escaped Makarios to Washington, the State Department was asked whether he would be received by Kissinger "as a private citizen, as Archbishop, or as President of Cyprus?" The answer? "[Kissinger]'s meeting with *Archbishop* Makarios on Monday." Every other government in the world, save the rapidly collapsing Greek dictatorship, recognized Makarios as the legitimate head of the Cyprus republic. Kissinger's unilateralism on the point is without diplomatic precedent and argues strongly for his collusion and sympathy with the armed handful who felt the same way.

It is worth emphasizing that Makarios was invited to Washington in the first place, as elected and legal president of Cyprus, by Senator William J. Fulbright of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and by his counterpart, Congressman Thomas Morgan, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Credit for their invitation belongs to the above-mentioned Elias Demetracopoulos, who had long warned of the coup and who was a friend of Fulbright's. It was he who conveyed the invitation to Makarios, who was by then in London meeting with the British foreign secretary. This initiative crowned a series of anti-junta activities by this guerrilla journalist and one-man band, who had already profoundly irritated Kissinger and become a special object of his spite. At the very last moment, and with a very poor grace, Kissinger was compelled to announce that he was receiving Makarios in his presidential and not his episcopal capacity.

Since Kissinger himself tells us that he had always known or assumed that another outbreak of violence in Cyprus would trigger a Turkish military intervention, we can assume in our turn that he was not surprised when such an intervention came. Nor does he seem to have been very much disconcerted. While the Greek junta remained in power, his efforts were principally directed to shielding it from retribution. He was opposed to the return of Makarios to the island and strongly opposed to Turkish or British use of force to undo the Greek coup (Britain being, remember, power with a treaty obligation and troops on Cyprus). This same counsel of inertia and acquiescence amply testified to in Kissinger's own memoirs as well as everyone else's—translated later into equally strict and repeated admonitions against any measures to *block* a Turkish invasion. Sir Tom McNally, then the chief political adviser to Britain's then foreign secretary and future prime minister, James Callaghan, has since disclosed that Kissinger "vetoed" at least one British military action to preempt a Turkish landing.



GREEK CYPRIOTS SEARCHING FOR MISSING RELATIVES AFTER THE TURKISH INVASION, 1974

This may seem paradoxical, but the long-standing sympathy for a partition of Cyprus, repeatedly expressed by the State and Defense departments, make it seem much less so. The demographic composition of the island (82 percent Greek, 18 percent Turkish) made it more logical for the partition to be imposed by Greece. But second best was to have it imposed by Turkey. And once Turkey had conducted two brutal invasions and occupied almost 40 percent of Cyprus, Kissinger exerted himself very strongly indeed to protect Turkey from any congressional [illegible] for this outright violation of international law and promiscuous and illegal misuse of American weaponry. He became so [illegible] that it was if he had never [illegible] the Greek colonels (though his expressed dislike of the returned Greek democratic leaders supplied an occasional reminder).

Not all the elements of this pro-Turkish policy can be charged to Kissinger personally; he inherited the Greek junta and [illegible] dislike of Makarios. Even in the [illegible] prosecu-

his own memoirs, however, he does admit what can otherwise be concluded from independent sources. Using covert channels, and short-circuiting the democratic process in his own country, he made himself a silent accomplice in a plan of political assassination, and when this plan went awry it led to the deaths of thousands of civilians, the violent uprooting of almost 200,000 refugees, and the creation of an unjust and unstable amputation of Cyprus that constitutes a serious threat to peace a full quarter century later.

On July 10, 1976, the European Commission of Human Rights adopted a report, prepared by eighteen distinguished jurists and chaired by Professor J.E.S. Fawcett, resulting from a year's research into the consequences of the Turkish invasion. It found that the Turkish army had engaged in the deliberate killing of civilians, in the execution of prisoners, in the torture and ill-treatment of detainees, in the arbitrary collective punishment and mass detention of civilians, and in systematic and unpunished acts of rape, torture, and looting. A large number of "disappeared" persons, both prisoners of war and civilians, are still "missing" from this period. This number included a dozen holders of United States passports, which is evidence in itself of an indiscriminate strategy when conducted by an army dependent on American aid and matériel.

Perhaps it was a reluctance to accept his responsibility for these outrages, as well as his responsibility for the original Sampson coup, that led Kissinger to tell a bizarre sequence of lies to his new friends, the Chinese. On October 2, 1974, he held a high-level meeting in New York with Qiao Guanhua, vice foreign minister of the People's Republic. It was the first substantive Sino-American meeting since the visit of Deng Xiaoping, and the first order of business was Cyprus. The memorandum, which is headed "TOP SECRET/SENSITIVE/EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY," has Kissinger first rejecting China's public claim that he had helped engineer the removal of Makarios. "We did not. We did not oppose Makarios" (a claim belied by his own memoirs). He says, "When the coup occurred I was in Moscow," which he was not. He says, "My people did not take these intelligence reports [concerning an impending coup] seriously," even though they had. He says that neither did Makarios take them seriously, even though Makarios had gone public in a denunciation of the Greek junta for its coup plans. He then makes the amazing claim that "we knew the Soviets had told the Turks to invade," which would make this the first Soviet-instigated invasion to be conducted by a NATO army and paid for with American aid.

A good liar must have a good memory. Kissinger is a stupendous liar with a remarkable memory. So perhaps some of this hysterical lying is explained by its context: the need to enlist China's anti-Soviet instincts. But the total of falsity is so impressive that it suggests something additional, something more like denial or delusion, or even a confession by other means.



BLOODBATH IN BANGLADESH

Cyprus was not the first instance in which a perceived need to mollify China outweighed even the most minimal concern for human life elsewhere. On April 6, 1971, a cable of protest was written from the United States Consulate in what was then East Pakistan, the Bengali "wing" of the Muslim state of Pakistan, known to its restive nationalist inhabitants by the name Bangladesh. The cable's senior signatory, the consul general in Dhaka, was named Archer Blood, though it might have become known as the Blood Telegram in any case. Sent directly to Washington, its purpose was, quite simply, to denounce the complicity of the United States government in genocide. Its main section read

> OUR GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED TO DENOUNCE THE [illegible] DEMOCRACY. GOVERNMENT HAS FAILED TO TAKE FORCEFUL MEASURES TO PROTECT [illegible] OF THE SMALL UNARMED [illegible] WHO [illegible] TO CALL THE WEST [illegible] GOVERNMENT [illegible] GOVERNMENT HAS [illegible] CONSIDER MORAL BANKRUPTCY, IRONICALLY AT A TIME WHEN THE USSR SENT PRESIDENT YAHYA KHAN A MESSAGE DEFENDING DEMOCRACY, CONDEMNING THE ARREST OF A LEADER OF A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED MAJORITY PARTY. . . . BUT WE HAVE CHOSEN NOT TO INTERVENE, EVEN MORALLY, ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE AWAMI [illegible] THE OTHERWISE

[redacted] [Italics added.]

This was signed by twenty members of the United States' diplomatic *equipe* in Bangladesh and, on its arrival at the State Department, by a further nine senior officers in the South Asia division. It was the most public and the most strongly worded *démarche*, from State Department servants to the State Department, that has ever been recorded.

The circumstances fully warranted the protest. In December 1970, the Pakistani military elite had permitted the first open elections in a decade. The vote was easily won by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the Bengali-based Awami League, who gained a large overall majority in the proposed National Assembly. (In the East alone, it won 167 out of 169 seats.) This, among other things, meant a challenge to the political and military and economic hegemony of the Western "wing." The National Assembly had been scheduled to meet on March 3, 1971. On March 1, General Yahya Khan, head of the supposedly outgoing military regime, postponed its convening, which resulted in mass protests and nonviolent civil disobedience in the East.

On March 25, 1971, the Pakistani army struck at the Bengali capital of Dhaka. Having arrested and kidnapped Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and taken him to West Pakistan, it set about massacring his supporters. The foreign press had been preemptively expelled from the city, but much of the direct evidence of what then happened was provided via a radio transmitter operated by the American consulate. Archer Blood himself supplied an account of one episode directly to the State Department and to Henry Kissinger's National Security Council. Having readied the ambush, Pakistani regular soldiers set fire to the women's dormitory at the university and then mowed the occupants down with machine guns as they sought to escape. (The guns, along with all the other weaponry, had been furnished under American military-assistance programs.)

Other reports, since amply vindicated, were supplied to the London *Times* and *Sunday Times* by the courageous reporter Anthony Mascarenhas and flashed around a horrified world. Rape, murder, dismemberment, and the state murder of children were employed as deliberate methods of repression and intimidation. At least 10,000 civilians were butchered in the first three days. The eventual civilian death toll has never been placed at less than half a million and has been put as high as 3 million. Since almost all Hindu citizens were at risk by definition from Pakistani military chauvinism (once that Pakistan's Muslim co-religionists were ignored), the first movement of millions of refugees—perhaps as many as 10 million—began to cross the Indian frontier. To summarize, then: first, the direct negation of a democratic election; second, the unleashing of a genocidal policy; third, the creation of a very dangerous international crisis. Within a short time, Ambassador Kenneth Keating, the ranking American diplomat in New Delhi, had added his voice to those of the dissenters. It was a time, he told Washington, when a principled stand against the authors of this aggression and atrocity would also make the best pragmatic sense. Keating, a former senator from New York, used a very suggestive phrase in his cable of March 29, 1971, calling on the administration to "PROMPTLY, PUBLICLY AND [redacted]." It was "MOST IMPORTANT THESE ACTIONS BE TAKEN NOW," he warned, "[redacted]."

Nixon and Kissinger acted quickly. That is to say, Archer Blood was immediately recalled from his post, and Ambassador Keating was described by the president to Kissinger, with some contempt, as having been "taken over by the Indians." In late April 1971, at the very height of the mass murder, Kissinger sent a message to General Yahya Khan, thanking him for his "delicacy and tact."

Some of Kissinger's hysterical lying was meant to enlist China's anti-Soviet instincts

We now know of one reason why the general was so favored at a time when he had made himself—and his patrons—responsible for the grossest crimes against humanity. In April 1971, an American Ping-Pong team had accepted a surprise invitation to compete in Beijing, and by the end of that month, using the Pakistani ambassador as an intermediary, the Chinese authorities had forwarded a letter inviting Nixon to send an envoy. Thus there was one motive of realpolitik for the shame that Nixon and Kissinger were to visit on their own country for its complicity in the extermination of the Bengalis.

Those who like to plead realpolitik, however, might wish to consider some further circumstances. There already was, and had been for some time, a "back channel" between Washington and Beijing. It ran through Nicolae Ceausescu's Romania; not a decorative choice but not, at that stage, a positively criminal one. To a serious person like

Chou En-Lai, there was no reason to confine approaches to the narrow channel afforded by a blood-soaked (and short-lived, as it turned out) despot like the delicate and tactful Yahya Khan. Either Chou En-Lai wanted contact, in other [illegible] he did not. As Lawrence Lifschultz, the primary historian of this period, has put it:

> Winston Lord, Kissinger's deputy at the National Security Council, stressed to investigators the internal rationale that developed within the upper echelons of the Administration. Lord told [the staff



STARVATION IN BANGLADESH, 1971

> of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace]. "We had to demonstrate to China we were a reliable counterpart to deal with. We had to show China that we respect a mutual friend." How, after two decades of belligerent animosity with the [illegible] Papal Encyclical supporter Pakistan in its bloody civil war was supposed to demonstrate to [illegible] that the U.S. "was a reliable government to deal with" was a mystifying proposition which more cynical observers of the events, both in and outside the U.S. government, consider to have been an excuse justifying the simple convenience of the Islamabad link—a link which Washington had no overriding desire to shift.

Second, the knowledge of this secret diplomacy and its accompanying privileges obviously freed the Pakistani general of such restraints as might have inhibited him. He told his closest associates, including his minister of communications, G. W. Choudhury, that his private understanding with Washington and Beijing would protect him. Choudhury later wrote, "If Nixon and Kissinger had not given him that false hope, he'd have been more realistic." Thus the collusion with him in the matter of China increases the direct complicity of Nixon and Kissinger in the massacres.

Only a reopened congressional inquiry with subpoena power could determine whether there was any direct connection, apart from the self-evident ones of consistent statecraft attested by recurring and reliable testimony, between the secret genocidal diplomacy of 1971 and the secret destabilizing diplomacy of 1975. The task of disproving such a connection, meanwhile, would appear to rest on those who believe that everything is an accident.

TIMOR MORTIS

One small but significant territory has the distinction of being omitted—entirely omitted—from Henry Kissinger's memoirs. And since East Timor is left out of the third and final volume (*Years of Renewal*) it cannot hope, like Cyprus, for a hasty later emendation. It has, in short, been airbrushed.

The date of the Indonesian invasion of this small neighboring country—December 7, 1975—is significant. On that date, President Gerald Ford and his secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, arrived in Hawaii, having concluded an official visit to Jakarta. Since they had come fresh from a meeting with Indonesia's military junta, and since the United States was Indonesia's principal supplier of military hardware (Portugal, a NATO ally, had broken relations with Indonesia on the point), it seemed reasonable to inquire whether the two leaders had given the invaders any impression amounting to a "green light." The president was evasive:

> When he landed at Hawaii, reporters asked Mr. Ford for comment on the invasion of Timor. He smiled and said: "We'll talk about that later." But press secretary Ron Nessen later gave reporters a statement saying: "The United States is always concerned about the use of violence. The President hopes it can be resolved peacefully."

Photograph © Bernard Bajolet/Magnum Photos Inc.

The literal incoherence of this official utterance—a peaceful resolution to a use of violence—may perhaps have possessed an inner coherence: the hope of a speedy victory for overwhelming force. Kissinger moved this suspicion a shade nearer to actualization in his own more candid comment, which was uttered while he was still on Indonesian soil. He told the press in Jakarta that the United States would not recognize the republic declared by FRETILIN (Revolutionary Front for the Liberation of East Timor) and that the United States understands Indonesia's position on the question."

So gruesome were the subsequent reports of mass slaughter, rape, and deliberate starvation that bluntness fell somewhat out of fashion. The killing of several Australian journalists who had witnessed Indonesia's atrocities, the devastation in the capital city of Dili, and the stubbornness of FRETILIN's hugely outgunned rural resistance made East Timor an embarrassment to, rather than an advertisement for, Jakarta's new order. Kissinger generally attempted to avoid any discussion of his involvement in the extirpation of the Timorese—an ongoing involvement, since he authorized backdoor shipments of weapons to those doing the extirpating—and was ably seconded in this by his ambassador to the United Nations, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who later confided in his memoir, *A Dangerous Place*, that in the matter of East Timor the initial invasion toll was "almost the proportion of casualties experienced by the Soviet Union during the Second World War." Moynihan continued:

> [T]he United States wished things to turn out as they did, and worked to bring this about. The Department of State desired that the United Nations prove utterly ineffective in whatever measures it undertook. This task was given to me, and I carried it forward with no misconsidered lack of success.

The terms "United States" and "Department of State" are here foully prostituted, by this supposed prose master, since they are used as synonyms for Henry Kissinger.

Twenty years later, on July 11, 1995, Kissinger was confronted with direct questions on the subject. Publicizing and promoting his then latest book, *Diplomacy*, at an event sponsored by The Learning Exchange at the Park Central Hotel in New York City, he perhaps (having omitted Timor from his book and from his talk) did not anticipate the first line of questioning that arose from the floor. Constancio Pinto, a former resistance leader in Timor who had been captured and tortured and had escaped to the United States, opened the bidding:

> [I'm a] Lum Timorese. My name is Constancio Pinto. And I followed your speech today and it's really interesting. One thing that I know you didn't mention is that place invaded by Indonesia in 1975. It is in Southeast Asia. As a result of the invasion [illegible] people [illegible] were killed. As a Timorese, I'd like to ask you: Indonesia the day before the invasion of East



> Timor. The United States actually supported Indonesia in East Timor. So I would like to know what you were doing at that time.

Kissinger: "What was I doing at that time? The whole time or just about Timor? . . . What most people who deal with government don't understand is one of the most overwhelming experiences of being in high office. That there are always more good things than you can possibly do. There are always more people [illegible]. And when you're in global policy and you're a global power, there are so many issues. . . . We had at that time, there was a war going on in Angola. We had just been driven out of Vietnam. We were conducting negotiations in the Middle East, and Lebanon had blown up. We were on a trip to China. Maybe, regrettably, we weren't ever thinking about Timor. I'm telling you what the truth of the matter is. The reason we were in Indonesia was actually incidental. We had originally intended to go to China, we incoming President Ford and myself and some others. We had originally intended to go to China for five days. This was the period when Mao was very ill and it had been an upheaval in China. So we cut our trip to China short. . . .

Timor was never discussed with us when we were in Indonesia. At the airport as we were leaving, the Indonesians told us that they were going to occupy the Portuguese colony of East Timor that did not seem to be a very significant event. I concur. The Indonesians occupied the Portuguese colony of Goa [illegible] and it looked like another process of decolonization. Nobody had the foggiest idea of [illegible] would happen afterwards. And indeed, I don't [illegible] opinion

[illegible] what we would have said if someone had asked our opinion. . . .

[illegible] I can't tell him in exactly in East Timor. The population of East Timor has resisted, and I don't know whether the casualty figures are correct. I just don't know, but they're certainly significant, and there's no question that it's a huge tragedy. All I'm telling you is what we knew in 1975. This was not a big thing on our radar screen. Nobody has ever heard again of Goa after the Indians occupied it. . . . And to us, Timor, look at a map, it's a little speck of an island in a huge archipelago, half of which was Portuguese. We had no reason to say the Portuguese should stay there. . . .

ALLAN NAIRN: Mr. Kissinger, my name is Allan Nairn. I'm a journalist in the United States. I'm one of the Americans who survived the massacre in East Timor on November 12, 1991, a massacre during which Indonesian troops armed with American M-16s gunned down at least 271 Timorese civilians in front of the Santa Cruz Catholic cemetery as they were gathered in the act of peaceful mourning and protest. Now you just said that in your meeting with Suharto on the afternoon of December 6, 1975, you did not discuss Timor. You did not discuss it until you came to the airport. Well, I have here the official State Department transcript of your and President Ford's conversation with General Suharto, the dictator of Indonesia. . . . It has been edited under the Freedom of Information Act, so the whole text is not there. It is clear from the portions of the text that is here that in fact you did discuss the impending invasion of Timor with Suharto, a fact which was confirmed to me by President Ford himself in an interview I had with him. President Ford told me that in fact you discussed the impending invasion of Timor with Suharto and that you gave the U.S. . . .

[illegible] Who? Ford?

NAIRN: That you and President Ford together gave U.S. approval for the invasion of East Timor. Here is another internal State Department memo. . . . This is a memo of a December 18, 1975, meeting held at the State Department. Here you [illegible] are to attend in that trip.

KISSINGER AND NIXON BELIEVED THAT THE U.S. SHOULD NEVER BE "A PITIFUL, HELPLESS GIANT"

[illegible] paper a finding by the State Department legal adviser Mr. Leigh that the Indonesian invasion of East Timor was illegal, that it not only violated international law, it violated a treaty with the U.S. because U.S. weapons were used, and it's clear from this transcript, which I invite anyone in the audience to peruse, that you were angry at them first because you feared this memo would leak and second because you were supporting the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. . . . If one looks at the public actions, sixteen hours after you left that meeting with Suharto the Indonesian troops began parachuting over Dili, the capital of East Timor. They came ashore and began the massacre that culminated in a third of the Timorese population [[one fifth]]. You announced an immediate doubling of U.S. military aid to Indonesia at the time.

KISSINGER: Look, I think we all got the point . . .

NAIRN: My question, Mr. Kissinger, my question, Dr. Kissinger, is twofold: First, will you give a waiver under the Privacy Act to support full declassification of this memo so we can see exactly what you and President Ford said to Suharto? Secondly, would you support the convening of an international war-crimes tribunal under U.N. supervision on the subject of East Timor, and would you agree to abide by its verdict in regard to your own conduct?

KISSINGER: I mean, uh, really, this sort of comment is one of the reasons why the conduct of foreign policy is becoming nearly impossible under these conditions. Here is a fellow who's got one obsession . . . he collects a bunch of documents, you don't know what is in these documents . . .

NAIRN: I invite your audience to read them.

It's interesting to notice the final decomposition of Kissinger's normally efficient if robotic syntax in that final answer. It's also interesting to see, once again, the operations of his denial mechanism. If Kissinger and his patron Nixon were identified with any one core belief, it was that the United States should never be, or even appear to be, a "pitiful, helpless giant." Kissinger's own writings and speeches are heavily larded with rhetoric about "credibility" and the need to impress both friend and foe with the mettle of American resolve. Yet, in response to any inquiry that might implicate him in crime and fiasco, he rushes to humiliate his own country and its professional servants, suggesting that they know little, care less, are poorly informed, and are easily rattled by the pace of events. He also resorts to a demagogic isolationism. This is as much as to claim that the United States is a pushover for any ambitious or irredentist banana republic.

This semiconscious reversal of rhetoric also leads to renewed episodes of hysterical and improvised lying. (Recall his claim to the Chinese that it was the Soviets who had instigated the Turkish invasion of Cyprus.) The idea that Indonesia's annexation of Timor may be compared to India's occupation of Goa is too absurd to have been cited in any apologia before or since. What Kissinger seems to like about the comparison is the rapidity with which Goa was forgotten. What he overlooks is that it was forgotten because (1) it was not a bloodbath on the scale of Timor and (2) it completed the decolonization of India. Timor represented the *cementing* of colonization by Indonesia. And, quite clearly, an Indonesian

invasion that began a few hours after Kissinger had left the tarmac at Jakarta airport must have been planned and readied several days before he arrived. Such plans would have been known by my embassy military attaches and certainly by my visiting secretary of state. We have, in fact, the word of C. Philip Liechty, a former CIA operations officer in Indonesia, that

> Suharto was given the green light to do what he did. There was discussion in the embassy and in talks with the State Department about the problems that would be created for us if the public and Congress became aware of the level and type of military assistance that was going to Indonesia at that time . . . Without continued heavy U.S. logistical military support the Indonesians might not have been able to pull it off.

The desire to appear to have been uninvolved may—if we are charitable—arise in part from the fact that even Indonesia's foreign minister, Adam Malik, conceded in public a death toll of between 50,000 and 80,000 Timorese civilians *in the first eighteen months* of Indonesia's war of subjugation: in other words, on Kissinger's watch, and inflicted with weapons that he bent American laws to furnish to the killers. Now that a form of democracy has returned to Indonesia, which in its first post-dictatorial act renounced the annexation of East Timor and—after a bloody last pogrom by its auxiliaries—withdrew from the territory, we may be able to learn more exactly the extent of the quasi-genocide.

Kissinger's arrogance in 1975 did not dispose of two matters of legality, both of them in the province of the State Department. The first was the violation of international law by Indonesia, in a case where jurisdiction clearly rested with a Portuguese and NATO government of which Kissinger (partly as a result of its support for "decolonization") did not approve. The second was the violation of American law, which stipulated that weapons supplied to Indonesia were to be employed only in self-defense. State Department officials, bound by law, were likewise bound to conclude that United States aid to the generals in Jakarta would have to be cut off. Their memo summarizing this case was the cause of the tremendous internal row that is minuted below.

SECRET/SENSITIVE
MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION
Participants:
The Secretary [Henry Kissinger]
Deputy Secretary [Robert] Ingersoll
Under Secretary [for Political Affairs Joseph] Sisco
Under Secretary [Charles] Maw
Deputy Under Secretary [Lawrence] Eagleburger
Assistant Secretary [Philip] Habib
Monroe Leigh, Legal Advisor
Jerry Bremer, Notetaker

Date: December [illegible]
Subject: Department Policy

The Secretary: [illegible] I want to say a little bit on behalf of the Department's conduct in my absence. Until last week I thought we had a disciplined group, now [illegible] completely. Take it or leave it, Phil. You know my attitude and anyone who [illegible] my position to you do not know that I [illegible] proved it. The only consolation is to put your



TIMORESE CIVILIANS PROTESTING THE OCCUPATION BY INDONESIAN FORCES, [illegible]

self on record. It is a disgrace to treat the Secretary of State this way.

What possible explanation is there for it? I had told you to stop it quietly. What is your place doing, Phil, to let this happen? It is incomprehensible. . . .

Habib: Our assessment was that it was [illegible] trouble, it would come up [illegible]. And I was told they decided it was desirable to go ahead with the sale.

The Secretary: Nonsense. I said I don't [illegible] and I mean per [illegible].

Habib: The sale will not [illegible].

The Secretary: Yes it will and it will go to Congress [illegible].

Habib: I was [illegible] I was told by [illegible] come up.

The Secretary: That means that after [illegible]. And that means two [illegible].

Habib: No, I got it back channel. It was just one paragraph double talk and cryptic so I knew what it was talking about. I was told that I [illegible] that there was a legal requirement to do it.

The Secretary: I am [illegible] I [illegible] [illegible] law is not [illegible].

Sisco: We were told that you had decided we had to stop.

The Secretary: Just a minute, just a minute. You all know my view on this. [illegible] implied that it was aggression.

Leigh: The [illegible] [illegible] agreement with us

The Secretary: The Israelis when they go into [illegible] now is the last time we protested that?

[illegible] different situation.

Habib: It's self-defense.

The Secretary: And we can't construe a Communist government in the middle of Indonesia as self-defense?

Leigh: Well . . .

The Secretary: Then you're saying that arms can't be used for defense?

Habib: No, they can be used for the defense of Indonesia.

The Secretary: Now take a look at this basic theme that is coming out on Angola. These SOBs are leaking all of this stuff to [*New York Times* reporter] Les Gelb.

Sisco: I can tell you who.

KISSINGER: "ON THE TIMOR THING . . . IT WILL COME OUT THAT KISSINGER . . . VIOLATED THE LAW"

The Secretary: Who?

Sisco: [National Security Council member William] Hyland spoke to him.

The Secretary: Wait a minute—Hyland said . . .

Sisco: He said he briefed Gelb.

The Secretary: I want these people to know that our concern in Angola is not the economic wealth or a naval base. It has to do with the USSR operating 8,000 miles from home when all the surrounding states are asking for our help. This will affect the Europeans, the Soviets, and China.

On the Timor thing, that will leak in three months, and *it will come out that Kissinger overruled his prisitine bureaucrats and violated the law*. [Italics added.] How many people in [this legal adviser's office] know about this?

Leigh: Three.

Habib: There are at least two in my office.

The Secretary: That's covered by in the meeting so you're talking about not less than 15 or 20.

You have a responsibility to recognize that we are living in a revolutionary situation. Everything on paper will be used against me.

Habib: We do that and take account of that all the time. . . .

The Secretary: Every day some SOB in the Department [can't] come in [illegible] Angola but no one is defending Angola. Find me one quote in the Gelb article defending our policy in Angola.

Habib: I think the leaks and dissent are the burden you have to bear. . . .

The Secretary: . . . This is not minor league stuff. We are going to lose big. The President says to the Chinese that we're going to stand firm in Angola and two weeks later we get out. I go to a NATO meeting and meanwhile the Department leaks that we're worried about a naval base and says it's an exaggeration or aberration of Kissinger's. I don't care about the oil or the base but I do care about the African reaction when they see the Soviets pull it off and we don't do anything. . . . The Chinese will say we're a country that was run out of Indochina for 50,000 men and is now being run out of Angola for less than $50 million. . . .

The Secretary: It cannot be that our agreement with Indonesia says that the arms are for internal purposes only. I think you will find that it says that they are legitimately used for self-defense.

There are two problems. The merits of the case which you had a duty to raise with me. The second is how to put these to me. But to put it into a cable 30 hours before I return, knowing how cables are handled in this building, guarantees that it will be a national disaster and that transcends whatever [Deputy Legal Adviser George] Aldrich has in his feverish mind.

I took care of it with the administrative thing by ordering Carlyle [Maw] not to make any new sales.

How will the situation get better in six weeks?

Habib: They may get it cleaned up by then.

The Secretary: The Department is falling apart and has reached the point where it disobeys clear-cut orders.

Habib: We sent the cable because we thought it was needed and we thought it needed your attention. This was ten days ago.

The Secretary: Nonsense. When did I get the cable, Jerry?

Bremer: Not before the weekend. I think perhaps on Sunday.

The Secretary: You had to know what my view on this was. No one who has worked with me in the last two years could not know what my view would be on Timor.

Habib: Well, let us look at it—talk to Leigh. There are still some legal requirements. I can't understand why it went out if it was not legally required.

The Secretary: Am I wrong in assuming that the Indonesians will go up in smoke if they hear about this?

Habib: Well, it's better than a cutoff. It could be done at a low level.

The Secretary: We have four weeks before Congress comes back. That's plenty of time.

Leigh: The way to handle the administrative cutoff would be that we are studying the situation.

The Secretary: And 36 hours was going to be a major problem?

Leigh: We had a meeting in Sisco's office and decided to send the message.

The Secretary: I know what the law is but how can it be in the U.S. national interest for us to give up on Angola and kick the Indonesians in the teeth? Once it is on paper, there will be a lot of FSO-6's who can make themselves feel good who can write for the Open Forum Panel on the thing even though I will turn out to be right in the end.

Habib: The second problem on leaking of cables is different.

The Secretary: Secret's incomprehensible.

Habib: Public interest. You can't say that any NODIS ["No Distribution"; the most restricted level of classification] cable will leak. But we can't guarantee that it won't. Almost this latest one we sent out in Congress's hands [at the writing of the memorandum of conversation, it was still being withheld by the White House] it will be released eventually.

The Secretary: You have an obligation to the national interest. I don't care if we sell equipment to Indonesia or not. Don't bother me at Dover. Don't take off. But you have an obligation to figure out how to serve your country. The Foreign Service is not to serve itself. The Service is a dedicated service to the United States and that's what the Foreign Service.

Habib: I understand that that's what this cable would do.

The Secretary: The minute you put this into the system you cannot resolve it without a machine.

Leigh: There's only one question. What do we say to Congress if we're asked?

The Secretary: We cut it off while we are studying it. We intend to start examining Timor.

Nobody, it must be said, comes out of this meeting especially well; the secretary's civil servants were anything but "pristine." Still it can be noted of Kissinger that, in complete contrast to his public statements, he (1) forbore from any mention of Cold War, (2) did not trouble to conceal his long-held views on the matter, berating his underlings for being so dense as not to know them; (3) did not affect to be taken by surprise by events in East Timor; (4) admitted that he was breaking the law; and (5) felt it necessary to deny that he would profit personally from the arms shipments, a denial for which nobody had asked him.

That Kissinger understood Portugal's continuing legal sovereignty in East Timor is shown by a NODIS memorandum of a Camp David meeting between himself, General Suharto, and President Ford on the preceding July 5, 1975. Almost every mention of the text has been deleted by editorial decision, and much of the discussion is unilluminating except about the eagerness of the administration to supply naval, air, and military equipment to the junta, but at one point, just before Kissinger makes his entrance, President Ford asks his guest: "Have the Portuguese set a date yet for allowing the Timor people to make their choice?" His entire answer is obliterated by deletion, but let it never be said that Kissinger's State Department did not know that Portugal was entitled, indeed mandated, to hold a free election for the Timorese. It is improbable that Suharto, in the excised answer, was assuring his hosts that such an open election would be won by candidates favoring annexation by Indonesia.

The [illegible] objectives did indeed resume in January, after a short interval in which Congress was misled as advertised.

On November 19, 1975, Jack Anderson reported a damning [illegible] between President Ford on East Timor and a number of classified U.S. intelligence documents relating to the 1975 aggression. One of the latter papers describes how Indonesia's generals were pressing Suharto "to authorize direct military intervention," while another informs Ford and Kissinger that Suharto would raise the East Timor issue at their December 1975 meeting and would "try and elicit a sympathetic attitude." The relatively guileless Ford was happy to tell Anderson that the American national interest "had to be on the side of Indonesia." He may or may not have been aware that he was thereby giving the lie to everything ever said by Kissinger on the subject.



[illegible] FREEDOM FIGHTER, 1975

A WET JOB IN WASHINGTON?

As we have [illegible] tendency to personalize his politics. His policies have [illegible] literally to the death, [illegible] hundreds of thousands but have also involved the targeting of certain inconvenient individuals: General Schneider, Archbishop Makarios, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. And, as we have also more than once glimpsed, Kissinger has a special relish for low-level revenge.

It seems possible that [illegible] converge in a single case: a plan to kidnap and murder Elias P. Demetracopoulos, a distinguished Greek journalist who, [illegible] opposition to the dictatorship that disfigured his homeland between 1967 and 1974. In the course of these events, he made [illegible] Washington, D.C., supporting himself as a consultant to a respected Wall Street firm. Innumerable senators, congressmen, Hill staffers, diplomats, and reporters have testified to the extraordinary one-

[illegible] and information that he [illegible] the military gangsters who had usurped power in Athens. Since that same junta enjoyed the sympathy of powerful interests in Washington, Demetracopoulos was compelled to combat on two fronts, and he made some influential enemies.

After the collapse of the Greek dictatorship in 1974, Demetracopoulos gained access to the secret police files in Athens and examined what he had long suspected: there had been more than one attempt made to kidnap and eliminate him. Files held by the KYP—the Greek equivalent of the CIA—revealed that the then dictator, Georgios Papadopoulos, and his deputy security chief, Michael Roufogalis, several times contacted the Greek military mission in Washington with precisely this end in view. Stamped with the words "COSMIC: Eyes Only"—the highest Greek security classification—this traffic involved a plethora of schemes. They had in common a desire to see Demetracopoulos snatched from Washington and repatriated. An assassination in Washington might



have been embarrassing; moreover, there seems to have been a need to interrogate Demetracopoulos before dispatching him. One proposal was to smuggle Demetracopoulos aboard a Greek civilian airliner; another, to put him on a Greek military plane; and still another, to get him aboard a [illegible] it were not for the proven record of irrationality and mania among the leaders of the [illegible] one might be tempted to dismiss at least the third of these plans as a fantasy.

[illegible] in particular stands out in the COSMIC cables.

Seeking to discover what kind of "cooperation" this might have been, Demetracopoulos in 1976 engaged an attorney—William A. Dobrovir of the D.C. firm of Dobrovir, Oakes, Gebhardt and Scull—and brought suit under the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act. He was able to obtain many hundreds of documents from the FBI, the CIA, and the State Department, as well as from the Department of Justice and the Pentagon. A number of these papers indicated that copies had been furnished to the National Security Council, then the domain of Henry Kissinger. But requests for documentation from this source were unavailing. As previously noted, Kissinger had upon leaving office made a hostage of his own papers—copying them, classifying them as "personal," and deeding them to the Library of Congress on condition that they be held privately. Thus Demetracopoulos was met with a stone wall when he used the law to try and prise anything from the NSC. In March 1977, however, the NSC finally responded to repeated legal initiatives by releasing the skeletal "computer indices" of the files that had been kept on Demetracopoulos. Paging through these, his attention was not unnaturally caught by the following:

> 7024513 DOCUMENT= 5 0F 5 PAGE = 1 OF 1
> KEYWORDS ACKNOWLEDGING SENS MOSS
> BURDICK GRAVEL RE MR DEMETRA
> COPOULOS DEATH IN ATHENS PRISON
> DATE 701218

"Well, it's not every day," said Demetracopoulos when I interviewed him, "that you read about your own death in a state document." His attorney was bound to agree, and he wrote a series of letters to Kissinger asking for copies of the file to which the indices referred. For *seven years* Kissinger declined to favor Demetracopoulos's lawyer with a reply. When eventually he did respond, it was only through his own lawyer, who wrote that

> efforts were made to search the collection for copies of documents which meet the description provided . . . No such copies could be found.

"Efforts were made" is, of course, a piece of obfuscation that might describe the most perfunctory inquiry. We are therefore left with the question: Did Kissinger know of, or approve, or form a part of, that "cooperation of the various agencies of the U.S. Government" on which foreign despots had been counting for a design of kidnapping, torture, and execution?

To begin with an obvious question: Why should a figure of Kissinger's stature either know about, or care about, the existence of a lone dissident journalist? This question is quite easily answered: the record shows that Kissinger knew very well who Demetracopoulos was and detested him. The two men had actually met in Athens in 1956, when Demetracopoulos had hosted a

[illegible] luncheon at the Grand Bretagne Hotel for the visiting professor. Over the next decade Demetracopoulos had been prominent among those warning of and resisting CIA military intervention in Greek politics. The CIA generally favored such an intervention and maintained intimate connections with those who were planning it. In November 1963 the director of the CIA, John McCone, signed an internal memorandum directing "any substantive derogatory data which can be utilized to deny [Demetracopoulos] subsequent entry to U.S." No such derogatory information was available, and when the coup came Demetracopoulos was able to settle in Washington, D.C., and begin his exile campaign.

He began it suspiciously enough, by supplying his own derogatory information about the Nixon and Agnew campaign of 1968. This campaign—already tainted badly enough by the betrayal of the Vietnam peace negotiations—was also receiving illegal donations from the Greek military dictatorship. The money came from Michael Rockefeller at the KYP and was handed over in cash, to John Mitchell by an ultra-conservative Greek-American businessman named Thomas Pappas. The sum involved was $549,000, a considerable amount by the standards of the day. Its receipt was doubly illegal: foreign governments are prohibited from making campaign donations (as are foreigners in general), and, given that the KYP was in receipt of CIA subsidies, there existed the further danger that American intelligence money was being recycled back into the American political process—in direct violation of the CIA's own charter.

Demetracopoulos took his findings to Larry O'Brien, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, who issued a call for an inquiry into the activities of Pappas and the warm relations existing between the Nixon-Agnew campaign and the Athens junta. A number of historians have since speculated as to whether it was evidence of this "Greek connection," with its immense potential for damage, that Nixon and Mitchell's burglars were seeking when they entered O'Brien's Watergate office under the cover of night. Considerable weight is lent to this view by one salient fact: when the Nixon White House was seeking "hush money" for the burglars, it turned to Thomas Pappas to provide it.

Elias Demetracopoulos's dangerous knowledge of this guilty secret, and his incessant lobbying on the Hill in Washington against Nixon and Kissinger's client regime in Athens, drew unwelcome attention. He later sued both the FBI and the CIA—becoming the first person ever to do so successfully—and received written admissions from both agencies that they possessed "no derogatory information" about him. In the course of these [illegible] director William Colby [illegible] for "rather extensive [illegible] October 2, 1969; August 25, 1971, and March 14, 1973; and February 19 and October 24, 1974.

[illegible] since the [illegible] Demetracopoulos [illegible] once found himself [illegible] On September 7, 1971, he had lunch at Washington's fashionable Jockey Club with Nixon's chief henchman, Murray Chotiner, who told him bluntly, "Lay off Pappas. You can be in trouble. You can be deported. It's not smart politics. You know Tom Pappas is a friend of the President." The next month, on October 27, 1971, Demetracopoulos was lunching with Robert Novak at Sans Souci and was threatened by Pappas himself, who came over from an adjacent table to tell him and Novak that he could make trouble for anyone who wanted him investigated. On the preceding July 12, Demetracopoulos had testified before the European subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, chaired by Congressman Benjamin Rosenthal of New York, about the influence of Pappas on U.S. foreign policy and the Athens dictatorship (and vice versa). Before his oral testimony could be printed, a Justice Department lawyer appeared at the subcommittee's office and demanded a copy of the statement. Demetracopoulos had then, on September 17, furnished a memorandum on Pappas's activities to the [illegible] committee. His written deposition closed with the words, "Finally, I have submitted [illegible] committee [illegible] documentary evidence which I believe will be useful." [illegible] Howard Hunt, [illegible] Hunt's wife, Dorothy, [illegible] the Nixon White House."

WHY SHOULD KISSINGER KNOW OR CARE ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF A LONE DISSIDENT JOURNALIST?

Demetracopoulos then received a letter from Louise Gore M[illegible] [illegible] dated as the current Vice President's [illegible] and the proprietress of the Fairfax Hotel in Washington, D.C., where the boy politician grew up. She [illegible] as a Republican state senator from Maryland and as the woman who introduced Spiro Agnew to Richard Nixon. She [illegible] Attorney General Mitchell [illegible] as Nixon's representative to UNESCO. Demetracopoulos [illegible]

and political types, as a tenant of an apartment in her hotel. He had also been a friend since 1959. On January 24, 1972, she wrote to him,

> I went to Perle's [Perle Mesta's] luncheon for [illegible] Mitchell yesterday and sat next to John [illegible] rumours at your end and your testimony against Lipset. He kept the name, to have you deported."
>
> At first I tried to wish him it he had any reason to think you could be deported and he didn't have any answer— But then tried to counter by asking me what I knew about you and why we were friends.
>
> It really got out of hand. It was all he'd talk about during lunch and everyone at the table was listening . . .

Among those present at the table were George Bush, then ambassador to the United Nations, and numerous other diplomats. The attorney general's lack of restraint and want of tact, on such an occasion, and at the very table of legendary hostess Perle Mesta, were clearly symptomatic of a considerable irritation, even rage.

I have related this background in order to show that Demetracopoulos was under surveillance, that he possessed information highly damaging to an important Nixon-Kissinger client, and that his identity was well known to those in power, in both Washington and Athens. Henry Tasca, the United States ambassador in Athens at the time, was a Nixon and Kissinger crony with a very lenient attitude toward the dictatorship. (He later testified before a closed session of Congress that he had known of the 1968 payments by the Greek secret police to the Nixon campaign.) In July 1971, shortly after Demetracopoulos testified before Congressman Rosenthal's subcommittee,

THE FBI FURNISHED KISSINGER WITH SLANDEROUS MATERIAL ABOUT ELIAS DEMETRACOPOULOS

Tasca sent a four-page secret cable from Athens. It began:

> [illegible] NATO ALLIANCE AND WEAKEN THE U.S. SECURITY PO-[illegible]

This was certainly calculated to take Demetracopoulos seriously. So were the closing paragraphs, which read:

> [illegible] PERSONAL ATTENTION IN THE HOPE THAT A WAY WILL BE FOUND TO STEP UP AN INVESTIGATION OF [illegible] WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR ADVICE.
>
> I BRING THIS MATTER TO YOUR ATTENTION NOW, BELIEVING THAT AS AN ALIEN RESIDENT IN THE UNITED STATES IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO SUBMIT HIM TO THE KIND OF SEARCHING AND PROFESSIONAL FBI INVESTIGATION [illegible] MYSTERY.

The cable was addressed, as is usual from an ambassador, to Secretary of State William Rogers. Yet it was also addressed—highly unusually—to Attorney General John Mitchell. Mitchell, as we have seen, was the only attorney general ever to serve on Henry Kissinger's supervisory 40 Committee.

The State Department duly urged that "the Department of Justice do everything possible to see if we can make a Foreign Agents case, or any kind of a case for that matter" against Demetracopoulos. Of course, as was later admitted, these investigations turned up nothing, as Demetracopoulos's influence did not derive from any sinister source or nexus. But when he said that the Greek dictatorship had trampled its own society, used censorship and torture, threatened Cyprus, and bought itself political influence in Washington, he was uttering potent truths. Nixon himself confirmed the connection between the junta and Pappas and Tasca on a post-Watergate White House tape dated May 23, 1973. He is talking to his renowned confidential secretary, Rose Mary Woods:

> Good old Tom Pappas, as you probably know or heard, it you haven't already heard, it is true, helped, at Mitchell's request, fundraising for some of the defendants. . . . He came up to see me on March 7th, Pappas did. Pappas came to see me about the ambassador to Greece, that he wanted to—he wanted to keep [Henry] Tasca there.

This same dictatorship had in June 1970 revoked Demetracopoulos's Greek citizenship, so he was a stateless person traveling only on a flimsy document giving him leave to reenter the United States. This fact assumed its own importance in December 1970, when his blind father was dying of pneumonia, alone, in Athens. Demetracopoulos sought permission to return home under a safe conduct, or laissez-passer, and was able to enlist numerous congressional friends in the attempt. Among those who signed a letter, dated December 11, to the Greek government and to Ambassador Tasca were Senators Frank E. Moss of Utah, Quentin N. Burdick of North Dakota, and Mike Gravel of Alaska. Senators Kennedy and Fulbright also expressed a personal interest.

Neither the Athens regime nor Tasca replied directly, but on December 20, four days after the old man had died without seeing his only son,

Senators Moss, Burdick, and Gravel received a telegram from the Greek Embassy in Washington. This instructed them that Demetracopoulos should have applied in person to the embassy—an odd demand to make of a man whose passport and citizenship had just been canceled by the dictatorship. Meanwhile, Demetracopoulos received a telephone call at his home, from Senator Kennedy, advising him not to accept any safe-conduct offer from Greece even if he was offered it. Had Demetracopoulos presented himself at the junta's embassy, he might well have been detained and kidnapped, in accordance with one of the plans we now know had been readied for his "disappearance." Of course, such a scheme would have been extremely difficult to carry out in the absence of some "cooperation" from local American intelligence officials.

Declassified cable traffic between Ambassador Tasca in Athens and Kissinger's deputy, Joseph Sisco, at the State Department shows that Senator Kennedy's misgivings were amply justified. In a cable dated December 14, 1970, from Sisco to Tasca, the ambassador was told,

> IT WOULD [Government of Greece] APPRECIATE DEMETRIOS DEMETRIOU ANTONOPOULOS [sic] SHOULD HE EMPLOY HIMSELF AVOID BEING PUT IN A POSITION OF GUARANTEEING ANY ASSURANCES THAT HE MAY HAVE OF BEING ABLE TO DEPART.

Concurring with this extraordinary statement, Tasca added that there was a possibility of Senator Gravel attending the funeral of Demetracopoulos Sr. Elias, wrote the ambassador,

> I SHOULD HELPFULLY HOPE [illegible] WOULD BE ABLE TO PREVENT HIM SOME WAY OR FROM [illegible] HIS [illegible] AS EFFECTIVELY AS HE HAS [illegible] FROM [illegible] SOME MANIFESTATION OF VIOLENCE, SUCH AS A SMALL BOMB.

The absurdity of this—Demetracopoulos has no record whatsoever of the advocacy or practice of violence—also has its sinister side. Suggested here is just the sort of pretext that the junta might need for a frame-up, or to cover up a "disappearance." The entire correspondence reeks of the priorities of both the embassy and the State Department, which reflect their contempt for elected U.S. senators, their dislike of dissent, and their need to gratify a group of Greek gangsters who are now rightly serving terms of life imprisonment.

Now look again at the computer index disgorged, after years of litigation, from Kissinger's NSC files. It bears the date of December 18, 1970, and appears to apprise Senators Moss, Burdick, and Gravel that Demetracopoulos had met his end in an Athens prison. Was this a contingency plan? A cover story? As long as Dr. Kissinger maintains his stubborn silence, and the control over his "private" state papers, it will be impossible to determine.

Having avoided the trap that seems to have been set for him in 1970, Demetracopoulos kept up his fusillade of leaks and disclosures, aimed at discrediting the Greek junta and embarrassing its American friends. He also warned of the junta's designs on the independence of Cyprus and of American indifference to, or complicity in, that policy. In this capacity he became a source of annoyance to Henry Kissinger. In a Memorandum for the Record on a briefing presented to President Gerald Ford in October 1974, there are references to "derogatory traces from our files" about Demetracopoulos, to "the derogatory blind memo" about him, and to "the long Kissinger memo" on him. Once again, and despite repeated requests from lawyers, Kissinger has declined to answer any queries about the whereabouts of these papers, or to shed any light on their contents. His National Security Council, however, asked the FBI to amass any information that might discredit Demetracopoulos, and between 1972 and 1974, according to papers since declassified, the bureau furnished Kissinger with slanderous and false material concerning, among other things, a romance that Demetracopoulos was allegedly conducting with a woman now dead and a supposed relationship between him and Daniel Ellsberg, a man he has never met.

This might seem trivial, were it not for the memoirs of Constantine Panayotakos, the ambassador of the Greek junta to Washington, D.C. Arriving to take up his post in February 1974, as the ambassador wrote in his later memoirs, entitled *In the First Line of Defense*,

> I was informed about some plans to kidnap and transport Elias Demetracopoulos to Greece; plans which reminded me of KGB methods. . . . On 29 May a document was transmitted to me from Angelos Vlachos, Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry, giving the views of the United States ambassador Henry Tasca, which he agreed with, about the most efficient means of dealing with the conspiracies and the whole activity of Demetracopoulos. Tasca's views are included in a memorandum of conversation with the Foreign Minister Spyridon Tetenes of 27 May.
>
> Finally, another brilliant idea of the most brilliant members of the Foreign Ministry, which, I am informed, was communicated to me on 12 June, was for me to seek special advice on the [illegible][4] of Elias Demetracopoulos from George Churchill-Bracken of the

[4] *The Greek word here, which is* exoudeterosi, *is pretty* [illegible]. *It is usually translated as "annihilation," though "elimination" might be an alternative reading. It is not a term for the assassination of a troublesome individual but for getting rid of him.*

Greek desk at the State Department, who was one of [illegible] enemies. [Italics added.]

Ambassador Panayotakos later wrote in a detailed letter, which is in my possession, that he had direct knowledge of a plan to abduct Demetracopoulos from Washington. His testimony is corroborated by an affidavit, which I also possess, signed by Charalambos Papadopoulos. Mr. Papadopoulos was at the time the political counselor to the Greek Embassy—the number-three position—and was bidden to lunch at the nearby Jockey Club, in late May or early June of 1974, by Ambassador Panayotakos and the assistant military attaché, Lieutenant Colonel Sotiris Yiounis. At the lunch, Yiounis broached the question of kidnapping Demetracopoulos, who was to be smuggled aboard a Greek NATO submarine at a harbor in Virginia.

Papadopoulos, who was Greek ambassador to Pakistan at the time he swore his affidavit, has since said that he was assured that Henry Kissinger was fully aware of the proposed operation. By that stage, the Greek junta had only a few weeks to live because of its crimes in Cyprus. Since the fall of the dictatorship even more extensive evidence of the junta's assassination plans has been uncovered, if only at the Athenian end of the plot. But this was not a regime that ever acted without Washington's "understanding." Attempts to unearth more detail have also been made in Washington. In 1975, Senators George McGovern and James Abourezk, seconded by Congressman Don Edwards of the House Intelligence Committee, asked Senator Frank Church to include the kidnapping plot against Demetracopoulos in the investigative work of his famous committee on U.S. intelligence. As first reported by the *New York Times* and then confirmed by Seymour Hersh,

KISSINGER ON SELLING WEAPONS TO INDONESIA: "I GET NOTHING FROM IT. I GET NO RAKEOFF"

Kissinger intervened personally with Church, citing grave but unspecified matters of national security, to have this aspect of the investigation shut down.

Some of this may seem fantastic, but we do know that Kissinger was conducting a vendetta against Demetracopoulos (as was Ambassador Henry Tasca); we do know that Kissinger was involved in high-level collusion with the Greek junta and had advance knowledge of the plot to assassinate Archbishop Makarios; and we do know that he had used the American Embassy in Chile to smuggle weapons for the contract killing of General René Schneider. The cover story in that case, too, was that the hired guns were "only" trying to kidnap him.

Thus the Demetracopoulos story, told here in full for the first time, makes a prima facie case that Henry Kissinger was at least aware of a plan to abduct and interrogate, and almost certainly kill, a civilian and journalist in Washington, D.C. In order to be cleared of the suspicion, and to explain the mysterious reference to Demetracopoulos's death in his own archives, Kissinger need only make those same archives at last accessible, or else be subpoenaed to do so.

THE PROFIT MARGIN

In his furious meeting at the State Department on December 18, 1975, shortly after his moment of complicity with the Indonesian generals over East Timor, Kissinger makes the following peculiar disavowal:

> I don't care if we sell equipment to Indonesia or not. I get nothing from it. I get no rakeoff.

One might have taken it for granted that a serving secretary of state had no direct interest in the sale of weapons to a foreign dictatorship; nobody at the meeting had suggested any such thing. How peculiar that Kissinger should deny an allegation that had not been made, answer a question that had not been asked.

It isn't possible to state with certainty when Kissinger began to profit personally from his association with the ruling circles in Indonesia, nor can it be definitely asserted that this profit was part of any "understanding" that originated in 1975. And yet there is a perfect congruence between Kissinger's foreign-policy counsel and his own business connections. One might call it a "harmony" of interests rather than a "conflict." (See map, page 96.)

Six years after he left office, Kissinger set up a private consulting firm named Kissinger Associates, which exists to smooth and facilitate contact between multinational corporations and foreign governments. The client list is secret, and contracts with the "Associates" contain a clause prohibiting any mention of the arrangement, but corporate clients include or have included American Express, Shearson Lehman Hutton, Arco, Daewoo of South Korea, H. J. Heinz, ITT, Lockheed Corporation, Anheuser-Busch, the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, Coca-Cola, Fiat, Revlon, Union Carbide, and Midland Bank. Kissinger's initial fellow "associates" were General Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger, both of whom had worked closely with him in the foreign-policy and national-security branches of government.

Numerous instances of a harmony between this firm and Kissinger's policy pronouncements can be cited. The best-known is probably that of

he People's Republic of China. Kissinger helped several American conglomerates, notably H. J. Heinz, to gain access to the Chinese market. As it was glowingly phrased by Anthony J. F. O'Reilly, CEO of Heinz,

> Kissinger and his associates make a real contribution and we think they are particularly helpful in countries with more centrally planned economies, where the principal players and the dynamics among the principal players are of critical importance. This is particularly true in China, where he is a popular figure and is viewed with particular respect.

On China, basically, we were well on our way to establishing the baby food presence there before Henry got involved. But once we decided to move, he had practical points to offer, such as on the relationship between Taiwan and Peking. He was helpful in seeing that we didn't take steps that would not have been helpful in Peking. His relevance obviously varies from market to market, but he's probably at his best in helping with contacts in that shadowy world where that counts.

The Chinese term for this sense of shadowy transactions is *guanxi*. In less judgmental American speech it would probably translate as "access." Selling baby food in China may seem innocuous enough, but when the Chinese regime turned its guns and tanks on its own children in Tiananmen Square in 1989, it had no more staunch defender than Henry Kissinger. Arguing very strongly against sanctions, he wrote that "China remains too important for America's national security to risk the relationship on the emotions of the moment." Taking the Deng Xiaoping view of the democratic turbulence, he added that "no government in the world would have tolerated having the main square of its capital occupied for eight weeks by tens of thousands of demonstrators." It is perhaps just as well that Kissinger's services were not retained by the Stalinist regimes of Romania, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany, which succumbed to just such public insolence later in the same year.

Nor was Kissinger's influence peddling confined to Heinz's nutritious products. He assisted Atlantic Richfield/Arco in the marketing of oil deposits discovered in China. He helped ITT (a corporation that had once helped him to overthrow the elected government of Chile) to hold a path-breaking board meeting in Beijing, and he performed similar services for David Rockefeller and the Chase Manhattan Bank, which held an international advisory committee meeting in the Chinese capital and met with Deng himself.

Six months before the massacre in Tiananmen Square, Kissinger set up a limited investment partnership named China Ventures, of which he personally was chairman, CEO, and general partner. Its brochure helpfully explained that CV involved itself only with projects that "enjoy the unquestioned support of the People's Republic of China." The move proved premature; the climate for investment on the Chinese mainland soured after the post-Tiananmen repression and the limited sanctions approved by Congress. This no doubt contributed to Kissinger's irritation at the criticism of Deng. But while China Ventures lasted, it drew large commitments from American Express, Coca-Cola, Heinz, and a large mining-and-extraction conglomerate named Freeport-McMoRan.



KISSINGER IN HIS OFFICE

Many of Kissinger's most extreme acts and positions have been taken, at least ostensibly, in the name of anti-Communism. So it is amusing to find him exerting himself on behalf of a regime that can guarantee safe investment by virtue of a one-party ideology, a ban on trade unions, and a slave-labor prison system. Nor is China the sole example here. When Lawrence Eagleburger left the State Department in 1984, having been ambassador to Yugoslavia, he became simultaneously a partner of Kissinger Associates; a director of LBS Bank, a subsidiary of a bank then owned by the Belgrade regime; and the American representative of the Yugoslav national wine [illegible]

came a client of Kissinger Associates, as did a Yugoslav construction concern named Enerjoprojekt. The Yugo is of particular interest because it was produced by the large state-run conglomerate that also functioned as Yugoslavia's military-industrial and arms-manufacturing complex. This complex was later seized by Slobodan Milosevic, along with the other sinews of what had been the Yugoslav National Army, and used to prosecute wars of aggression against four neighboring republics. At all times during this protracted crisis, and somewhat out of step with many of his usually hawkish colleagues, Henry Kissinger urged a consistent policy of conciliation with the Milosevic regime. (Mr. Eagleburger in due course rejoined the State Department as deputy secretary and briefly became secretary of state. So it goes.)

Much the same can be said for the dual involvement of the "Associates" with Saddam Hussein. When Saddam was riding high in the late 1980s, and having his way with the departments of Commerce and Agriculture, and throwing money around like the proverbial drunken sailor, and using poison gas and chemical weapons on his Kurdish population without a murmur from Washington, the U.S.-Iraq Business Forum provided a veritable fruit machine of contacts, contracts, and opportunities. Kissinger's partner Alan Stoga, who had also been the economist attached to his Reagan-era Commission on Central America, featured noticeably on a junket to Baghdad. At the same time, Kissinger's firm represented the shady Italian Banca Nazionale del Lavoro, which was later shown to have made illegal loans to Saddam's Baathist regime.

In the same year—1989—Kissinger made his lucrative connection with Freeport-McMoRan, a globalized firm based in New Orleans. Its business is the old-fashioned one of extracting oil, gas, and minerals. Its chairman, James Moffett, has probably earned the favorite titles bestowed by the business and financial pages, being beyond any doubt "flamboyant," "buccaneering," and a "venture capitalist." In 1989, Freeport paid Kissinger Associates a retainer of $200,000 and fees of $600,000, not to mention a promise of a 2 percent commission on future capital investments made with the Associates' advice. Freeport also made Kissinger a member of its board of directors at an annual salary of at least $30,000. In 1990 the two concerns went into business in Burma, the most grimly repressive state in all of South Asia. Freeport would drill for oil and gas, according to the agreement, and Kissinger's other client Daewoo would build the plant. That year, however, the Burmese generals, under their wonderful collective title of SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council), lost a popular election to the democratic opposition, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, and decided to annul the result. This development—yet more irritating calls for the isolation of the Burmese junta—was unfavorable to the Kissinger-Freeport-Daewoo triad, and the proposal lapsed.

But the next year, in March 1991, Kissinger was back in Indonesia with Mr. Moffett, closing a deal for a thirty-year license to continue exploiting a gigantic gold-and-copper mine. The mine is of prime importance for three reasons. First, it was operated as part of a joint venture with the Indonesian military government and with that government's maximum leader. Second, it is located on the island of Irian Jaya (in an area formerly known as West Irian), a part of the archipelago that, like East Timor, is only Indonesian by right of arbitrary conquest. Third, its operations commenced in 1973—two years before Henry Kissinger visited Indonesia and helped unleash the Indonesian bloodbath in East Timor while unlocking a flow of weaponry to his future business partners.

This could mean no more than the "harmony of interest" I suggested above. No more, in other words, than a happy coincidence. What is not coincidental is the following:

(1) Freeport's enormous Grasberg mine in Irian Jaya stands accused of creating an environmental and social catastrophe. In October 1995 the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), a federal body that exists to help American companies overseas, decided to cancel Freeport's investment insurance because of political risk, the very element on which Kissinger had furnished soothing assurances in 1991. OPIC concluded that Freeport's mine had "created and continues to pose unreasonable or major environmental, health or safety hazards with respect to the rivers that are being impacted by the tailings, the surrounding terrestrial ecosystem, and the local inhabitants."

(2) The "local inhabitants" who came last on that list are the Amungme people, whose protests at the environmental rape, and at working conditions in the mine, were met by Indonesian regular soldiers at the service of Freeport-McMoRan and under the orders of Suharto. In March 1996 large-scale rioting nearly closed the mine at a cost of four deaths and many injuries.

Freeport-McMoRan mounted an intense lobbying campaign in Washington, with Kissinger's help, to get its OPIC insurance reinstated. The price was the creation of a trust fund of $100 million for the repair of the Grasberg site after it and its surrounding ecology, has eventually been picked clean. All of this became moot with the overthrow of the Suharto dictatorship, the detention of Suharto himself, and the unmasking of an enormous nexus of "crony capitalism" involving him, his family, his military colleagues and certain favored multinational corporations

Its political revolution also restored, at incalculable human cost, the independence of East Timor. There was even a suggestion of a war crimes inquiry and a human rights tribunal to settle some part of the account for the years of genocide and occupation. Once again, Henry Kissinger has had to scan the news with anxiety and wonder whether even worse revelations are in store for him. It will be a national and international disgrace if the answer to this question is left to the pillaged and misgoverned people of Indonesia, rather than devolving onto an American Congress that has for so long shirked its proper responsibility.

The subject awaits its magistrate.

A NOTE ON THE LAW

As Henry Kissinger now understands, there are increasingly noticeable rents and tears in the cloak of immunity that has shrouded him until now. Recent evolutions in national and international law have made his position an exposed and, indeed, a vulnerable one. For convenience, the distinct areas of law may be grouped under four plain headings:

1) International Human Rights Law. This comprises the grand and sonorous covenants on the rights of the individual in relation to the state; it also protects the individual from other actors in the international community who might violate those rights. Following from the French Revolution's "Declaration of the Rights of Man," international human-rights law holds that political associations are legitimate only insofar as they preserve the dignity and well-being of individuals, a view that challenges the realpolitik privilege given to the "national interest." The United States is directly associated with sponsoring many of these covenants and has ratified several others.

2) The Law of Armed Conflict. Somewhat Protean and uneven, this represents the gradual emergence of a legal consensus on what is, and what is not, permissible during a state of war. It also comprises the various humanitarian agreements that determine the customary "law of war" and that attempt to reduce the oxymoronic element in this ancient debate.

3) International Criminal Law. This concerns any individual, including an agent of any state, who commits direct and grave atrocities against either his "own" citizens or those of another state. Covered here are genocide, crimes against humanity, and other crimes of war. The Rome Statute, which also establishes an International Criminal Court for the trial of individuals, including governmental offenders, is the codified lumma of this law as revised and updated since the Nuremberg precedent. It commands the signatures of most governments as well as, since December 31, 2000, that of the United States.

4) Domestic Law and the Law of Civil Remedies. Most governments have similar laws that govern crimes such as murder, kidnapping, and larceny, and many of them treat any offender from any country as the same. These laws in many cases permit a citizen of any country to seek redress in the courts of the offender's "host" country or country of citizenship. In United States law, one particularly relevant statute is the Alien Tort Claims Act.

The United States is the most generous in granting immunity to itself and partial immunity to its servants, and the most laggard in adhering to international treaties (ratifying the Genocide Convention only in 1988 and signing the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights only in 1992). And the provisions of the Rome Statute, which would expose Kissinger to dire punishment if they had been law from as early as 1968, are not retroactive. The Nuremberg principles, however, were in that year announced by an international convention to have no statute of limitations. International customary law would allow any signatory country (again exempting the United States) to bring suit against Kissinger for crimes against humanity in Indochina.

> THERE ARE INCREASINGLY NOTICEABLE RENTS AND TEARS IN KISSINGER'S CLOAK OF IMMUNITY

More importantly, United States federal courts have been found able to exercise jurisdiction over crimes such as assassination, kidnapping, and terrorism, even when these are supposedly protected by the doctrine of state or sovereign immunity. Of a number of landmark cases, the most salient one is the finding of the D.C. Circuit Court in 1980, concerning the car-bomb murder, by Pinochet's agents, of Orlando Letelier and Ronni Moffitt. The court held that "[w]hatever policy options may exist for a foreign country," the Pinochet regime "has no 'discretion' to perpetrate conduct designed to result in the assassination of an individual or individuals, action that is clearly contrary to the precepts of humanity as recognized in both national and international law." [Exception] [illegible] would apply to an American official seeking to assassinate a Chilean. Assassination was illegal both as a private and a public act when Henry Kissinger was in power, and when the attacks on General Schneider at [illegible] President Makarios of Cyprus took place.

As the Hinchey report to Congress in 2000

now demonstrates that U.S. government agents were knowingly party to acts of torture, murder, and "disappearance" by Pinochet's death squads. Chilean citizens will be able to bring suit in [illegible] under the Alien Tort Claims Act, which grants U.S. federal courts "subject-matter jurisdiction" over a claim when a non-U.S. citizen sues for a civil wrong committed in violation of a U.S. treaty or other international law. Chilean relatives of the "disappeared" and of General Schneider have recently expressed an intention to do so, and I am advised by several international lawyers that Henry Kissinger would indeed be liable under such proceedings.

The Alien Tort Claims Act would also permit victims in other countries, such as Bangladesh or Cambodia, to seek damages from Kissinger, on the model of the recent lawsuit filed in New York against Li Peng, among the Chinese Communist officials most accountable for the 1989 massacre in Tiananmen Square.

A significant body of legal theory can be brought to bear on the application of "customary law" to the bombardment of civilians in Indochina. The Genocide Convention was not ratified by the United States until 1988. In 1951, however, it was declared by the International Court of Justice to be customary international law. The work of the International Law Commission is in full agreement with this view. There would be argument over whether the numberless victims were a "protected group" under existing law, and also as to whether their treatment was sufficiently indiscriminate, but such argument would place heavy burdens on the defense as well as the prosecution.[5]

An important recent development is the enforcement by third countries—most notably Spain—of the international laws that bind all states. Baltasar Garzon, the Spanish judge who initiated the successful prosecution of General Pinochet, has also secured the detention in Mexico of the Argentine torturer Ricardo Miguel Cavallo, who is now held in prison awaiting extradition. The parliament of Belgium has recently empowered Belgian courts to exercise jurisdiction over war crimes and breaches of the Geneva Convention committed anywhere in the world by a citizen of any country. This practice, which is on the increase, has at minimum the effect of limiting the ability of certain people to travel or to avoid extradition. The Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark, and Germany have all recently employed the Geneva Conventions to prosecute war criminals for actions committed against non-nationals by non-nationals. The British House of Lords decision in the matter of Pinochet has also decisively negated the defense of "sovereign immunity" for acts committed by a government or by those following a government's orders. This has led in turn to Pinochet's prosecution in his own country.

There remains the question of American law. Kissinger himself admits that he knowingly broke the law in continuing to supply American weapons to Indonesia, which used them to violate the neutrality of a neighboring territory and to perpetrate gross crimes against humanity. Kissinger also faces legal trouble over his part in the ethnic cleansing of the British colonial island of Diego Garcia in the early 1970s, when indigenous inhabitants were displaced to make room for a United States military base. Lawyers for the Chagos Islanders have already won a judgment in the British courts on this matter, which now moves to a hearing in the United States. The torts cited are "forced relocation, torture, and genocide."

In this altered climate, the United States faces an interesting dilemma. At any moment, one of its most famous citizens may be found liable for terrorist actions under the Alien Tort Claims Act, or may be subject to an international request for extradition, or may be arrested if he travels to a foreign country, or may be cited for crimes against humanity by a court in an allied nation. The non-adherence by the United States to certain treaties and its reluctance to extradite make it improbable that American authorities would cooperate with such actions, though this would gravely undermine the righteousness with which Washington addresses other nations on the subject of human rights. There is also the option of bringing Kissinger to justice in an American court with an American prosecutor. Again the contingency seems a fantastically remote one, but, again, the failure to do so would expose the country to a much more obvious charge of double standards than would have been apparent even two years ago.

The burden therefore rests with the American legal community and with the American human-rights lobbies and non-governmental organizations. They can either persist in averting their gaze from the egregious impunity enjoyed by a notorious war criminal and lawbreaker or they can become seized by the exalted standards to which they continually hold everyone else. This current state of suspended animation, however, cannot last. If the courts and lawyers of this country will not do their duty, we shall watch as the victims and survivors of this man pursue justice and vindication in their own dignified and painstaking way, and at their own expense, and we shall be put to shame.

See especially Nicole Barrett: "Holding Individual Leaders Responsible for Violations of Customary International Law," Columbia Human Rights Law Review, Spring 2001.

SEIZE THE DAY JOB

Sacrificing Saul Bellow on the altar of one's own career

By Lee Siegel



Discussed in this essay:

Bellow: A Biography, by James Atlas. Random House, 2000. 688 pages. $35.

The novelist Saul Bellow is many things to many people. To some, he is the self-made literary Bourbon who restored the soul to American letters; to others, the Jewish Jackie Robinson who smashed his own idiom through WASP exclusions. To still others, he is the wisecracking custodian of the best that has been thought and said; or the patient stylist in Flaubert's line, laboring to make language a prehensile attachment to the eye. To my mind, this is all either puffle or partial truth. Bellow's genius consists in his being one of the greatest meshuganas who ever lived.

"Meshuga" means harmlessly crazy in Yiddish, but I am going to take liberties and use it in the sense of being gripped by divine laughter. Bellow himself characterizes this state of being in "Him with His Foot in His Mouth," a story about a man, Shawmut, whose truth-compulsion guarantees his social isolation: "In various ways I have been trying to say this to you, using words like seizure, rapture, demonic possession, frenzy, *Furor*, divine madness, or even solar storm—on the microcosmic scale." Shawmut's irresistible urge to tell it straight manifests itself in witticisms that arouse the wildest life-saving laughter. It is the opposite of the spasms of blind self-regard that destroyed many of Bellow's friends and contemporaries: John Berryman, Randall Jarrell, Robert Lowell, Jean Stafford, Delmore Schwartz. Meshuga is the effect of a destruction, a reconstitution, in the form of a momentary flying-apart. The Meshuga Principle vetoes that self-destructive outburst or keeps it from actually work to repress.

Bellow has written a wise and affecting essay called "Mozart: An Overture" about his lifelong love for the composer. Mozartean laughter is, in fact, the very space that fuels his meshuga energy. "That's the *animal* nature—it is the [laughing] creature, forever rising up," thinks Augie March to himself at the conclusion of *The Adventures of Augie March*, a novel that begins almost farcically with an old woman at the mercy of an animal—a dog—and ends with several dogs bounding into the air and kissing the face of their master, an image of happy parity between humans and their physical nature. This communion between the individual and his or her animal power is one of Bellow's great themes. Here is most of the final paragraph of *Herzog*:

> [illegible] back from the woods, he got [illegible] flowers for the child. He [illegible] another there were [illegible] in the heaven. Had "Mechanical Contrivance" Well, [illegible] Mercedes. Anyhow, [illegible] Gaught. Yet it could be said, [illegible] that [illegible] you could [illegible] the [illegible] as they [illegible] [illegible] Meanwhile he filled his [illegible]

Lee Siegel is a contributing writer for [illegible] *magazine and a contributing editor at* The New Republic. *He last appeared in* Harper's Magazine. *His story "Socrates Heights" is in* Granta. *This article was published on February 2001.*

[illegible] clutched the rainpipe. The spines [illegible] the cistern there were yellow day [illegible] But the [illegible] In the darker garden, he looked for peonies; perhaps some had survived. . . . He turned [illegible] toward the [illegible] down his hat with the roses and day lilies, on the half-painted piano, and went into his [illegible] bottle [illegible] Indian clubs. Walking over notes and papers, he [illegible] Recumbent couch. As he [illegible] he took a long breath, and then he lay, looking at [illegible] the screen pulled loose [illegible] and listening to the steady scratching of Mrs. Tuttle's broom. He wanted to tell her to sprinkle the floor. She was raising too much dust. In a few minutes he would call down to her: "Bring it down, Mrs. Tuttle. There's water in the sink." But not just yet.

At the close of a novel in which an intellectual has tried to reconcile his experience with his ideas about experience, Bellow creates a brief existential harmony. The passage modulates between nature and culture—from the natural woods to the civilized corkscrew; from the physical act of breaking the bottle to the mere civilized simulacrum of uncivilized behavior. There is the hat and the roses; the *half*-painted piano; the wine bottles and the Indian clubs; the civilized notes and papers that get savagely trodden on; the protective screen, which gets pulled loose by the wild vine. And the novel ends at a perfect Mozartean pitch, with dust, the primal element of death, about to be joined with water, the primal element of life. Herzog is set to issue instructions for the improvement of his condition; he is about to commence the operation of civilization once more. But he pauses. He would like his thoughts to stop. He wants the moment, at last, not the actuality, of death for just a few seconds longer, [illegible] that he will be able to [illegible]

Recommending life's riveters in such a way is a refusal to ac[illegible] the [illegible] of life. [illegible] is the essence of laughter and the function of art. It is also the promise of democracy. Bellow fittingly ends *Humboldt's Gift*, his epic story of a genius poet of humble origins who achieves fame before ruining himself, with an old joke from Jewish immigrant culture:

> "They used to tell one about a boy asking his grumpy old man when they were walking in the park, 'What's the name of this flower, Papa?' and the old guy is peevish and he yells, 'How should I know? Am I in the millinery business?'"

Such a guerrilla-like eruption of the Meshuga Principle can have a terrible effect on people who lack the imagination to question the circumstances life has presented to them. They get very nervous. They reach for their credentials; they brandish the signs of conventional success; they withdraw into cliques and coteries. Their defensiveness is the response of a sham meritocracy to a true democratic spirit. Sadly, a new biography of Bellow is animated by these very anxieties.

Now, if James Atlas is out of his mind (to borrow a line from Moses Herzog), it's all right with me. The unfolding of his condition, however, reveals a lot about American literary life. The brute fact of the matter, as it seems to me, is that Atlas, the author of *Bellow: A Biography*, which required over ten years to research and to write, would appear to have been driven insane by his subject's cosmic laughter.

Bellow, raised in Chicago, is the child of poor Russian-Jewish immigrants. Atlas, too, is an American-Jewish writer, of the next generation, and brought up in more comfortable circumstances (in nearby Evanston, as he tells us in his introduction). There is something novelistic about the meeting of these two men in the pages of Atlas's startlingly deficient biography. It is an almost Jamesian encounter between a man who made mistakes and took wrong turns and failed and created out of his life great art that transforms experience into truth, and his chronicler, who never took a false step and whose right moves finally caught up with him. It is an encounter between two opposing versions of American experience, and it is an encounter between two very different versions—there are, of course, many—of American-Jewish experience.

What exactly happened to James Atlas, a solid and reliable literary journalist, who for the past twenty years or so has been on the staff of such distinguished publications as *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times Magazine*? His writing for those and other magazines offers clues. First there appeared articles in which Atlas blithely declared the death of the independent intellectual in America ("the intellectual vocation . . . is largely obsolete, an archaic profession; the intellectual has gone the way of the cobbler and smithy"). Then there emerged, in piece after piece, Atlas's strange obsession with social and economic status ("if you don't have a six-figure book deal by the time you're thirty-five, you've failed"). Next Atlas turned up and proclaimed in print that the great modernist novels of Proust and Joyce and Mann were not worth reading ("I am bored to tears and long for nothing more than the latest issue of *Vanity Fair*"). Worst of all, the poor man was slipping in a reference, every chance he got, to the fact that he had attended Harvard ("As we walked toward the Harvard Yard, where a quarter of a century earlier I had dodged tear gas with a wet handkerchief over my mouth . . ."; "I called him up from a phone booth at the Harvard Club. He'd heard about my project, and was full of enthusiasm"; "A month later, in Harvard Square, I went to the Harvard Coop, where I'd shopped as a student"; "Meanwhile, the pledge envelope from Harvard—I finally promised a hundred just to get them off my back—lies in the drawer"). One can almost imagine, at the end of Atlas's relationship with Bellow, the biographer keeping his Harvard diploma in his inside jacket pocket and desperately fingering it whenever

Bellow said something wise or witty or wild.

It's especially Atlas's fateful rendezvous with this wildness of Bellow, with Bellow's demonic vitality, that seems at the root of his curdled spirit. Atlas himself, after all, has had little time for meshuga side trips. Not long after college, he published a first-rate and widely admired biography of Delmore Schwartz, and since then has advanced from one prestigious magazine position to another. Recalling his decision to write a biography of Bellow, he confides in the introduction that it "came at a difficult moment in my life." And what exactly was this difficult moment? A crisis induced by despair, grief, heartbreak? "I was," Atlas confides, "between projects." He was between projects.

The confrontation between such emotional constriction and Bellow's *animal ridens* is perhaps one reason for Atlas's ludicrously hostile and resentful approach to Bellow's life. It might help to explain why Atlas suppresses material that puts Bellow in a flattering light, material that an honest biographer would never consider excluding. He tiresomely refers, again and again, to what he at one point calls Bellow's "ill-concealed racism," his evidence being Bellow's honest if disturbing fictional expression of his fear of poor blacks' rage and violence in the seventies. Yet Atlas never mentions, while briefly touching on an early Bellow story, "Looking for Mr. Green," that Bellow sets the story in Chicago's black ghetto with the greatest empathy and that he identifies the elusive Mr. Green, who is black, with life itself. Atlas doesn't even tell us that the story has any black characters in it.

An even worse omission, given Atlas's recurrent charge that Bellow is insensitive to women, has to do with Anne Sexton. The poet cherished Bellow's writing, especially his novel *Henderson the Rain King*, the themes of which she drew on in several poems. The two pursued a lively and revealing correspondence, according to her biographer Diane Wood Middlebrook, in which Bellow seems touchingly to encourage the suicidal Sexton to cling to life. Atlas never mentions this material; indeed, he never mentions Sexton at all.

Atlas at one time wrote a novel, a thinly disguised memoir in the first person, entitled *The Great Pretender*. "For as all of Russian literature was said to have come out of Gogol's overcoat," Sven Birkerts wrote prophetically in a review of the book, "so all of *The Great Pretender* has come out of Bellow's hat. . . . Atlas would like to swallow [Bellow] whole and be him—patricide by anthropophagy."

Enjoy this sample:

> "You're destroying me," I complained. "I'm going to end up at Northern Illinois University."
>
> "So what's wrong with Northern Illinois University? People do go there, you know."
>
> Yeah, but not people whose fathers gave them a complete set of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* for their twelfth birthday. Make good, Sonny. Make good or else.

Not surprisingly, the novel flopped. A bilious biographer was born.

The Bellow we meet in the pages of Atlas's book must have been given the Nobel Prize by a Jewish charitable organization.

> In truth, [Bellow] hadn't fared well in menial jobs, his stints in his family's coal companies had ended disastrously.
>
> [Bellow] was unaware that in Eastern literary circles to discuss one's work was considered gauche.
>
> [Bellow] lacked the reserves of self-esteem needed to energize the rigorous self-criticism.

As the biography proceeds, as Bellow becomes more and more accomplished, and more and more famous, Atlas cuts him down to size. We get Bellow's philandering, his vengefulness, his temper, his philandering, his vanity, his five marriages and four divorces, his selfishness, his philandering, his philandering, his philandering. Atlas seems so flustered by Bellow's countless affairs

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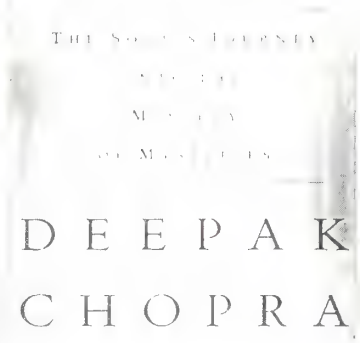
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with women that at one point he sputters out an insinuation that Bellow is actually gay, a speculation tossed off like a schoolkid's taunt and never returned to.

Maybe Bellow really is the biggest shit in the world. Maybe he really is the selfish, sexist, thin-skinned, retaliatory monster of egotism Atlas wants us to see him as. Once you've established his flawed character, what do you do with it? The occasion for writing about Bellow's life is his work, and the work is the only justification for scrutinizing Bellow's life. Otherwise all this not-very-shocking personal material is just what it is: unverifiable gossip. And it's not even gossip deepened and selected by time into history. Bellow is still alive—still writing, for that matter.

In a nearly 700-page biography, Atlas doesn't offer a single sustained reading of Bellow's fiction. Of the stunning scene that concludes *Seize the Day*, in which Tommy Wilhelm, the novel's protagonist, breaks down at a stranger's funeral and sinks "deeper than sorrow, through torn sobs and cries toward the consummation of his heart's ultimate need," all Atlas has to tell us is that Wilhelm is really Bellow and that this climactic moment is "an elegy to Bellow's father, dead only a year before." Never mind that Bellow portrays Wilhelm's father as a stingy, brutal monster, a wholly unsympathetic character who drives his son into despair. Some elegy. Atlas does not even examine the interview Bellow gave to *The Paris Review*'s "Writers at Work" series, an extraordinary window onto his life and art. Instead, he reduces the fiction to the bare factual facts that provoked the artist into transforming them, depending for his literal interpretations of the fiction on the integrity of people who once knew Bellow: "Schwartz appears as Sandor Himmelstein in *Herzog*, a reliable guide to the events in Bellow's life, according to Ralph Ross . . ."

I don't think I've read a biography in which the author seemed to take his subject so personally. Atlas incessantly reminds the reader—and Bellow—that the novelist long depended on his wealthy businessman-brothers for money. Bellow was a poor kid from a poor family, and Atlas lingers nastily over the young writer's penury, and over his setbacks and rejections. The biographer is obsessed with Bellow's professional failures and ordeals: his short-lived literary magazines; his unsuccessful plays, which Atlas spends an inordinate number of pages discussing; and, above all and always, Bellow's struggle to make a living from his writing. Bellow's first novel, *Dangling Man*, got mostly rave reviews, including one from Edmund Wilson in *The New Yorker*, and placed the young author at the heart of American literary life. That's unusual for a first novel. Atlas is unimpressed:

> He was thirty years old, and his one book had gotten some good reviews. . . . Yet he was still a Hyde Park intellectual with a closetful of ill-fitting suits, a wife and child to help support, and a postmark that read Stock Yards Station—in effect, nowhere.

Later, after Bellow has published his second novel, gone to Europe on a Guggenheim, and been celebrated by the cream of literary society in New York and London, Atlas reminds him that he:

> was still the threadbare artist, ill dressed and perpetually short of cash. He had a reputation among the *Partisan Review* crowd but was virtually unknown to the general public.

And, four years after the Yiddish inflections of *The Adventures of Augie March* had resurrected American literature and established Bellow as the most important novelist of his generation, Atlas contemptuously describes Bellow as "a novelist with no job and no fixed income." Why a man who does not consider writing novels a real job would want to write the biography of a novelist is a mystery.

Atlas, in fact, writes like Bellow's father (though of course without that father's stormy affection), an immigrant who naturally disapproved of his writer-son's limited financial prospects. His biography bursts with numbers and sums quoted from Bellow's advances, sales figures, royalties, and tax returns. "The $600,000 advance back about $160,000 on the trade edition, and subsidiary rights added another $200,000, leaving 'at risk' some $240,000." Augie March, meet Charles Schwab. Commenting on the young Bellow's yearning for a more meaningful life than the one his lower-middle-class origins offered him, Atlas again sneers, "Going into Dad's business: What could be more contemptible than that?" The biographer's philistine attitudes are almost self-satirizing:

> The two older brothers whose help [Saul] shared, Moishe and Schmule . . . were healthy, vigorous, dynamic; no one in the family was surprised when they went on to become big deal makers in Chicago real estate. . . . Their worldly success was a persistent rebuke to the impecuniousness of their intermittently broke and never wealthy brother. Together with [Bellow's father], who at last became a prosperous businessman in his forties, they formed a triumvirate from whose judgmental gaze the novelist struggled to free himself—without much success—throughout his days.

If only he could return his Pulitzer Prize and his three National Book Awards and his Nobel Prize and do it all over again! He might have become the dynamic Laundromat king of the South Side.

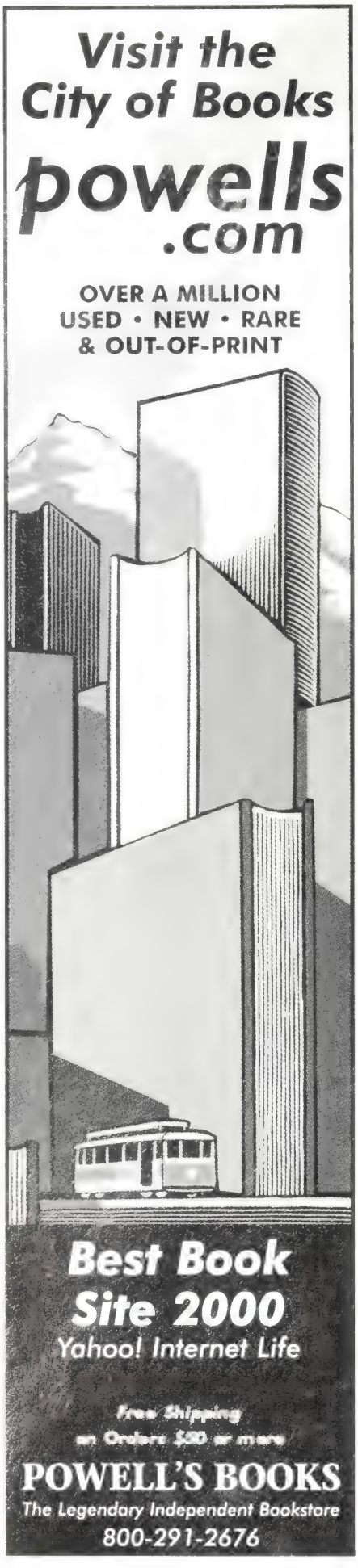
The most damaging effect of Atlas's single-minded prosecution of Bellow's life is that it hampers Atlas's professional competence. His biography is filled with contradictions and errors, with poor judgments and outright distortions. We read that Bellow was "disdainful of any effort to get ahead in the literary world—a form of defensiveness," and then about twenty pages later learn that Bellow was "ever expedient in matters of literary politics." At another point, Atlas writes that *The Adventures of Augie March* was "a modest triumph," explaining that it "never made the bestseller list." Yet one page later, he tells us that *Augie* "had made Bellow famous." A triumph not so modest. And fifty pages after Atlas

has conceded that Bellow had become famous, he tells us that Bellow, several years after *Augie March* appeared, was still "well on his way to fame." The biographer has tamed Bellow!

Atlas describes Bellow as "a novelist who was to make the process of becoming American one of his major themes." But the process of becoming American is not a theme in a *single one* of Bellow's novels and short stories. Bellow's characters, Jewish or not, are Americans who are in the process of becoming persons. For Atlas, Willis Mosby, the main character in Bellow's short story "Mosby's Memoirs," is an "older, more reflective version of [his] creator." Yet Bellow portrays Mosby as a casually vicious anti-Semite who admires Hitler's managerial skills. And Atlas thinks that in *Herzog* the phrase "potato love" reverently refers to a "powerful devotion to the family." In fact, Herzog isn't referring to family feeling at all. He uses the term to refer to his envious friend Sandor Himmelstein's pretense of affection for him, to Himmelstein's "amorphous, swelling, hungry, indiscriminate, cowardly potato love." Of course, this is also the kind of stifling inauthenticity a generation of sensitive Jewish sons and daughters—generations of everyone's sensitive sons and daughters, for that matter—struggled to free themselves from.

Atlas's identification with a particular kind of immigrant father—there were also the fathers who supported and encouraged their wayward artistic children—represents a sea change in American-Jewish writing. Leave aside the fine points of exactly what it means to be an American-Jewish writer, not to mention the danger of committing a coarse anachronism in using the designation. It is safe to say that the American-Jewish sensibility once was characterized by a skepticism about current conditions, which was in fact a way of affirming life. It had laughter and was devoid of the cold calculation that wears sentimentality like a fig leaf. It seemed to come from nowhere. American-Jewish literary expression had a special kind of ethical beauty, an inconsolable joy; a pregnant mirth drawn out of life's sadness. That sensibility is just about extinct. There are beautiful exceptions, to be sure. Leon Wieseltier's *Kaddish*, an impious masterpiece of filial piety, is the history of a soul in the form of a meditation on a ritual, which barely refers—"imagine"—to the author's self or to his father. It is a pointed sublimation that stands on their head two generations of American-Jewish autobiographical outpourings. And all the world-historical polemics of the much sentimentalized New York Jewish intellectuals don't rise to the moral courage of Philip Gourevitch's book on the Western complicity with genocide in Rwanda. And I would take one page of Jeffrey Rosen's writing on American law and society over one hundred pages of, say, Hannah Arendt's Olympian miscomprehensions of American law and society. But these are, again, beautiful exceptions. For the most part, rather than the heirs to Bellow and Roth and Mailer (and the New York intellectuals at their best), today one sees younger American-Jewish writers who are more like characters straight out of the satirical fiction of Bellow and Roth and Mailer.

One writer smoothly inserts a proprietary reference every chance he gets to the Holocaust (he got married on the anniversary of Kristallnacht as a gesture of defiance, and then he writes about getting married on the anniversary of Kristallnacht as a gesture of defiance); another pursues a power-fantasy of New York Jewish intellectual authority in a culture column for an online magazine, displaying a comical blend of insecure assertiveness and obsequious careerism that even Roth could not invent; another writes cute little affirmations of suburban life, as if she were making small talk while examining teeth; and still others continue to write about being Jewish, male, and horny, as though they were organizing briefs for distant, but not-so-



[illegible] law school exercise. Where have all the fine independent American-Jewish minds gone? Such cautious calculation is a form of rebellion against their artistic and intellectual parents' [illegible] also the windfall of [illegible] entrance, thanks to the [illegible] affluence of their actual parents.

When's the last time you read a piece of writing by a Jewish writer in his or her twenties or thirties, or even forties, that approached life with the fresh, vital Archimedean angle on life that has been the hallmark of American-Jewish writing? (God knows, I'm not holding myself up as an exception.) It is not at all that Jewish writers have become, en masse, anhedonists incapable of deep mischief. It is that many American-Jewish writers, who have been the custodians of the meshuga spirit in modern America, who gave American writing and American culture a new life after the Second World War, now (like Atlas) seem smugly to associate the chance-taking and the inspired condition of their cultural forebears ("But you will be wondering what happened to 'the inspired condition'"—*Herzog*) with a life of self-destruction and failure. Make good, boys and girls. Make good or else.

Of course, today's American-Jewish carefulness and complacency are part of the general atmosphere. Literary, artistic, and intellectual worlds used to set up their own hierarchies against the outside world's conventional hierarchies. The creative world's ranks were ordered according to personal gifts and idiosyncrasy, audacity and the capacity for self-reinvention. Now, in New York, you go to a literary, artistic, or intellectual party and you encounter the same pecking order that exists in the conventional world. Everyone is from Yale, Harvard, Princeton, or such like; they are standing around in the same formation, with the same nervous, contracted ambition, as they did in college. Everyone comes from money. In Bellow's day, the city's [illegible] were full of the peers of privilege, but they also brimmed with people from everywhere and from every level of society; yes, blacks, women, and gays, too. Not that outsiders don't break in now and again. One might have reservations about the young writer Dave Eggers's work, but at least he's not a calculating creature of old-school ties. (He is a raw, original calculating creature.) But Eggers is just one more semi-inspiring exception. Let's not kid ourselves. We are living now in the age of Atlas, the anti–Augie March.

The Adventures of Augie March is the great novel of the young person who not only almost ended up at Northern Illinois University but who experimented with life in the search for a calling rather than just a career. Like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Bellow's teeming picaresque tale sprang, in part, from the author's experience of traveling upward through society. If American democracy is ever put on trial, the American picaresque novel will be Exhibit A in its defense. Augie comes from, as Atlas likes to say, "nowhere." He is the kind of literary hero a money snob and an Ivy League snob like Atlas doesn't want to know from.

Augie is, among other things, a spiritual record of how a kid born into poverty uses culture. The novel rolls in culture references as if in clover. One of the fiercest critical arguments about Bellow is whether his dense cultural allusions mar his fiction. True to form, Atlas chalks these cultural allusions up to Bellow's "childish intoxication with 'the big ideas'"; "the products of a provincial Chicago boy's efforts to show that he wasn't provincial." (An ambitious poor boy or poor girl should never meet a teacher like James Atlas.) Augie, however, is proof of the artistic potency of Bellow's cerebral flights. As poor kids do, the young Bellow used culture to raise himself above his origins; Bellow the triumphant adult uses culture in his novels to, as it were, raise himself above culture, to drop back into experience. In Bellow, culture and an irreverence toward culture become, like laughter, a universal principle of upward human motion.

Here is a pertinent moment from *Augie March*, in which William Einhorn writes an obituary for his wealthy businessman-father—the "Commissioner"—for a local newspaper. Einhorn is Augie's first great teacher. Einhorn himself is self-taught and erudite, and also a cripple confined to a wheelchair. In other words, he is the very image of the man uplifted by the power of culture; ideas propel him where his legs have failed. Augie loves him. The older, completed Augie, looking back on his life, tells us that "William Einhorn was the first superior man I knew." Einhorn is no clumsy autodidact. He even talks like Augie, mixing racy street idioms with high-flown culture references in spontaneous bursts of eloquence and poetry:

> "Augie, you know another man in my position might be out of life for good. There's a view of man anyhow that he's only a sack of craving guts; you find it in Hamlet, as much as you want of it."

Bellow has Einhorn using culture in his obituary the way Bellow treats culture in his novels. He plays games with it:

> "The return of the hearse from the newly covered grave leaves a man to pass through the last changes of nature who found Chicago a swamp and left it a great city. He came after the Great Fire, said to be caused by Mrs. O'Leary's cow, in flight from the conscription of the Hapsburg tyrant, and in his life as a builder proved that great places do not have to be founded on the bones of slaves, like the pyramids of Pharaohs or the capital of Peter the Great on the banks of the Neva, where thousands were trampled in the Russian marshes. The lesson of an American life like my father's, in contrast to that of the murderer of the Strelitzes and of his own son, is that achievements are compatible with decency. My father was not familiar with the observation of Plato that philosophy is the study of death, but he died nevertheless like a philosopher, saying to the ancient man who watched by his bedside in the last moments. . . ."

Now, Einhorn doesn't talk in such pompous, awkward way. Why does Bellow have him write like that? Einhorn is shrewdly using culture as a lever for his own purposes, just as his creator does. This is the very next paragraph:

> We then went to his father's room [Einhorn] handed me things with instructions. "Tear this. This is for the fire, I don't want anyone to see it. Be sure you remember where you put this note—I'll ask for it tomorrow. . . . So this was the deal he had with Fineberg? What a shrewd old bastard, my dad, a real phenomenon."

Far from proving in his life that "great places do not have to be founded on the bones of slaves," Einhorn's father was a "shrewd old bastard" who knew how to climb to the top of the heap in turn-of-the-century Chicago. With the obituary's overblown, almost baronial cadences, Einhorn fabricates the image of a noble Commissioner—whose business Einhorn has inherited and needs to keep respectable. At the end of the chapter, Einhorn sums things up for Augie:

> "We never learn anything, never in the world, and in spite of all the history books written. . . . There's a regular warehouse of fine suggestions, and if we're not better it isn't because there aren't plenty of marvelous and true ideas to draw on, but because our vanity weighs more than all of them put together."

In one stroke, Einhorn acknowledges the pretense of his obituary, which is a kind of history, and an insightful one at that; places it in relation to his ego; and teaches Augie a lesson about social reality and the virtues and limitations of culture. Yet it is Einhorn's reading that has led him to be skeptical of a purely literary education. The power of books helps him affirm the primacy of experience, which leads him back to books, which he once more tests against experience. It is like the undulating dialectic between nature and culture at the end of *Herzog*.

Einhorn is Bellow's image of the ordinary man who labors to bring out his innate nobility—the nobility of the individual. Such regalness of the spirit is not conferred, it is extracted through hard work and alert living. Bellow's heroes are usually introspective because they are engaged in the process of paying unsparing attention to themselves. They wish to, in Augie's phrase, find the "axial lines" of their own specific existence and to follow them into their mortal allotment of dignity. Not surprisingly, Atlas mistakes this introspection, which requires a substantial sense of self, for the narcissist's self-obsession, which is the product of a reduced sense of self.

"Narcissism" happens to be the clinical condition that Atlas attempts to pin on Bellow. He mentions the "narcissistic traits that a succession of psychiatrists diagnosed in him." Not narcissism in the colloquial sense, in other words, but clinical narcissism. The problem is, Atlas never quotes a single psychiatrist or therapist making such a diagnosis. In one of this biography's lowest moments, Atlas finally stumbles upon Heinz Kohut, a famous psychoanalyst who was the grand theoretician of the narcissistic personality. In the late sixties, Bellow saw Kohut for a short time in Chicago's Hyde Park, where both men lived. Although Kohut, who died in 1981, never disclosed the identities of his patients in his notes, Atlas thinks he knows which patient Bellow is, and he thinks he has figured out that Kohut, too, diagnosed Bellow as a clinical narcissist. Yet Atlas doesn't even cite the source that he is relying on when he quotes Kohut's diagnosis of an anonymous "forty-year-old university professor."

Aside from the obvious ethical and professional questions Atlas's irresponsibility raises (we're talking about a still living patient, after all), his malicious encounters with Bellow's life are at the heart of his inability to grasp the nature of Bellow's art. Atlas uses Kohut's theories to support his fantasy about Bellow's psyche. He quotes Kohut: "The

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artist stands in proxy for his generation. He anticipates the dominant psychological problem of his era." But Atlas drops the art from Kohut's accurate, though trite, observation about artistic genius, and he keeps the psychological problem. So radical is Atlas's denial of the fact that he is chronicling the life of one of the twentieth century's greatest novelists that he writes about Bellow as if Bellow had never written any fiction at all.

It's hard to square clinical narcissism with Bellow's attachment to friends from seventy years ago, or with his powerful, if evidently tormented, family feeling. And it's hard to square the clinical narcissist's solipsism and inner emptiness with Bellow the novelist's curiosity and sympathy, with his extraordinary openness to other people's lives, with his uncanny, sensuous grasp of the sights, smells, sounds, and textures of physical reality. Clinical narcissists do not have a capacity for surrender to the world's sweetness and strangeness. Still, maybe Bellow is a clinical narcissist. Who knows? Again, it is a question of what to do with that bit of information. Meanwhile, the art is waiting.

The world's siren song, its sweetness and strangeness, is the ordeal of Bellow's heroes. Life fills them with such a sense of promise and beauty that, in the end, they turn inward as a way to escape the inevitable disappointments that plague passionately receptive natures.

"Men of most powerful appetite have always been the ones to doubt reality the most," says the African king Dahfu to Henderson in *Henderson the Rain King*. These life-famished figures are contemporary; they cannot, Dahfu continues, "bear that hopes should turn to misery, and loves to hatreds and deaths and silences, and so on." They are contemporary in precisely this sense: the more their desires expand, the further reality recedes.

So Bellow's heroes leap away from disappointing reality into ideas, and then away from insufficient ideas into sex, and away from sex into fantasy, and back to culture, and then back to experience—and on and on, in an infinite regression of distancing from the episodes in life that fall short of life's promise. They must protect their psyches from the insult of inadequate conditions. This psychoacrobatic motion is manic, like laughter; and it reproduces the odyssey of Mozart's music, which modulates from earth to sky to the far end of heaven and back to earth.

Bellow's heroes are in flight from reality to the heart of existence. They flee from life for love of life. Henderson is both stengthened and harried by a small persistent voice deep inside him that repeats, "I want I want I want." There is something terrible about these protagonists who are so consumed with desire. They burn life away with the intensity of their wanting, feeling, thinking, and almost always find themselves alone, barely alive, far away from other people. It is as if their defeat by desire were also their fulfillment of their desire. A wish for deprivation lurks in the depths of their voracity. Joseph reflects in *Dangling Man*:

> Of course, we suffer from heartless [illegible] And then there are our plans, idealizations. These are dangerous, too. They can consume us like parasites, eat us, drink us, and leave us lifelessly prostrate. And yet we are always inviting the parasite, as if we were eager to be drained and eaten.

With the exception of the Rabelaisian *Humboldt's Gift*, all of Bellow's novels end with the heroes in isolation: plunged into darkness in a movie theater (*The Victim*); walking along the edge of an icy North Sea (*Augie*); submerged in tears at a stranger's funeral (*Seize the Day*); running along the Arctic tundra (*Henderson the Rain King*); gazing toward cold infinite spaces from an astronomical observatory (*The Dean's December*); stationed at a laboratory near the North Pole (*More Die of Heartbreak*); diffused into a disembodied, oracular voice

hat seems to come from some where beyond life (*Dangling Man*, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, *Ravelstein*). These figures seem to will themselves into simulated oblivion. Such an end seems foreordained. A thin pane of glass exists between the Bellovian fictional persona and the other characters in the novels. Herzog concludes with a subtle melting of the third person into an atmosphere that speaks, as if the self, in the absence of God, were consoling itself by impersonating the neutrality of a divine voice:

> In a few minutes he would call down to her, "Dump it down, Mrs. Tuttle. There's water in the sink." But not just yet. At this time he had no messages for anyone. Nothing. Not a single word.

Thus does the Bellovian hero give himself up utterly to the world that he has rendered with such self-forgetful vividness and accuracy. And thus does he end up sacrificing the world, and the world of other people, to his sanity. World and self vanish into the absolute freedom of a fresh beginning. It is a kind of fecund nowhere, both chilling and charged with inspiring possibility.

I spent the day with Bellow once and told him a joke. It was an old joke from Odessa. One day Cohen tells Goldberg, his business partner of fifty years, that he wants out. The distraught Goldberg asks several times why Cohen wants to end such a long association, and finally Cohen tells him, in exasperation, that the reason is because Goldberg is pretentious. Goldberg is shocked; he is speechless for a moment, and finally he replies, "Who? *Moi*?" Bellow laughed richly, his eyes glittering, and then he said, "But that is not just a joke." He would say that. The self deluding mystery of the *moi* is Bellow's turf, just as it has been the turf of every great writer since Sophocles. (If you wanted to sum up *Oedipus Rex* and *King Lear* with two words, they would be "Who? *Moi*?") But only those who have a *moi* know what it means to want to solve the riddle of it, or to escape from it, or to endure it with laughter. ■

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SHE

By Jason Brown



Everything Natalie said seemed, to herself, to have been said better by him. He was less fond of speaking, however, than he was of hitting people in the face, which seemed a more likely source of her love to those of us who were in speech class with him. It could be, we reasoned, that she was in love with the kind of things he might say if he spoke more often.

It was easy for someone like David Dion to be casual about fate. He was still in junior high, but high school girls picked him up in their daddy's cars and had sex with him out at the pit. No one I spoke to on a regular basis had even been to the pit. He was not anyone's boyfriend, didn't need to be. It was hard to guess how old he was if you didn't already know, if he hadn't tumbled down into your grade from the grade above when he was held back. He couldn't be that smart, you could tell from the way he grinned at himself, but he was smart enough to know he didn't have to be loyal to any one girl.

Dion fought high school boys all the time; that was nothing. Once he broke his fist against the face of a man in his twenties before getting his own nose smashed against the pavement. In school he sat two seats away from me in homeroom, where he spilled over hi desk, stroking h thin mustache an cracking his knuck les, one-handed, on finger at a time. I wood shop we wer partners, making gun rack. I made th rack, he kept it. H slouched back in hi chair, his elbows o the sill, looking ou the window from th corner of his eye lik a prisoner. Not eve the shop teacher sa anything. They wer related, kids said. H was related all ove mostly in the nex county, where ever other ice fisherma was an uncle, ever other woman behind the cash regis ter an aunt, and the rest cousins. H could walk into any store out ther and borrow ten bucks; he owe everyone, even me, at least tha much. I loaned him one dollar at time. He rolled the bills into joint and smoked them, or sold them fo two dollars, making a few bucks, h said, for later at the bar.

When Mr. Dawson of Dawson Variety was told by one of his bas

[illegible] for the [illegible] of his collection, Driving the Heart, was published by [illegible].

Illustration by Jim Ward Morris / Jodi Lemmon

ketball players that Dion, their center, was in love with Natalie, he pictured the ridge of her muscle extending up from her knee into her track shorts. He had seen her the day before with Ron, the high school boy she went with, who was going to drop out to start in the air-conditioning business with his father so that he and Natalie could get married as soon as possible. Her best friend, Denise, whose information was no better than secondhand at this point, said, well, it wasn't Love with Ron. Mr. Dawson overheard this. Denise was standing in his store with her friends Kristy and Frances waiting to buy a diet soda.

"I thought," Mr. Dawson said, she was with that boy Ron."

"Well, she was," Denise said, secretly pleased at being the center of attention. "It just wasn't love," she said, her voice rising. "Anything but. Just a thing. This is Love."

My friend Andy's mother said, shaking her head sitting at their kitchen table with a half dozen of her friends, that Natalie had bloomed too early. That's why people thought she should stay with Ron, who was a good thing in the long run, even though he was homely, with a protruding jaw and blemishes over his cheeks, and he was older. He was one of the Catholic boys, who would wait, and by the time they were ready and married she would have lost her looks, be heavy and distended, those legs as thick as posts; just when no one else wanted her he would be there for her with enough desire stored up to blind his true sight for a lifetime.

One of the things she loved about Dion was that he always let the other guy have the first shot. He never in his life coldcocked a guy. He let them know first, sometimes days in advance. Someone would tell the guy, and they would meet. If the guy went down the fight was over. That was one of the things she loved about him. Dion walked away, or sometimes helped the guy on his feet. Once you get over the fear of getting hit, the same every time, he told me in wood shop, it doesn't matter what happens.

When Natalie's mother first heard that her daughter was in love with Dion, she said nothing, only stared at the wall. She was one of the last to know; people were afraid to tell her at first. Finally Mrs. Dawson called up to tell her while pretending she must already know. "You mean you don't know? Oh, my." Maybe, Mrs. Dawson was thinking, Natalie's mother will do something now.

Most of Natalie's clothes came directly from her mother's sewing machine, but they were not cheap looking on her. Every article was made to fit every precocious curve. Her father, on disability from the Bath Iron Works, was rarely seen except at The Wharf having a few or driving around in his truck scratching his beard with his cut hat low over his brow. He could only see out of one eye.

Before Dion, she and Ron would walk down the hill after school, passing my house, crossing the tracks, on their way to the public library, which was where a lot of us went, strange to say, when we had nothing else to do. They walked alone, holding hands, had been going out since she was in sixth grade, he in junior high. In sixth grade people kissed on the playground, Missy D. and Kevin R. yelling at each other across the lunchroom, the curses from their lips exactly the opposite of the intoxicated delight and fear on their faces, and there was even a story of David M., the short calm kid, getting a hand job at the movie theater. But no one went out, went steady, held hands in public at that age, except them. Ms. Hegel, the librarian, had no worries when they sat down to hold hands across the top of the reading table. Others had to be watched and checked on, would be up to nasty business in the stacks among the geography books. Ron and Natalie would only kiss each other for half a minute on the grass in front of the library while waiting for his mother to pick him up for dinner, and then her mother would come pick her up. Later they would talk on the phone for thirty minutes, no longer, according to his mother's rules. His mother worried that her mother made no rules. A girl should have rules, his mother said.

Occasionally people saw them kissing in front of the library. Mr. Wally drove by and happened to stop at the corner and look in their direction. Mr. Dawson, on his way to practice, saw them once; her father saw them once, other kids saw them. I saw them. I stepped out of the library door. They did not see me. I was there. They sat on the steps two feet apart and strained their necks sideways to have their lips meet for this one moment, no more, before he checked to see if his mother was rounding the corner yet. Her mother was often late, and once did not arrive at all. Mr. Dawson, returning from practice, just before dusk, saw her sitting there, knees pulled up, and offered her a ride home.

My mother must have forgotten, she said, with her hands clamped between her knees, palms out. But Mr. Dawson suspected it was more than that—everyone suspected, and he asked her if everything, honestly, everything, was all right. Everyone knew everything was not what it should be in that vinyl-sided house at the edge of a field her grandfather had once owned but her father had sold off one piece at a time. Mr. Dawson said she could talk candidly, she could trust him, Ron's former coach, but not even Ron had ever been inside her house. When asked this time, by Mr. Dawson, she responded in the same way she always had. Everything is fine. I'm just tired. It's all

At first it was hard to believe she and Dion were together at all. No one saw them together holding hands or even talking in the daylight. Denise reported seeing them kissing in the dark behind the school, and she was the first to confront Natalie about it, about Ron. Ron's over, she said. How? Denise wanted to know. How did this happen? She shrugged her shoulders.

When she and Dion first got together she insisted: not in the daylight, not on Central Street by Dawson's or Boynton's Pizza, not in his brother's car, which he drove only at night anyway because he didn't have a license, even if his father's brother

was a cop and didn't care. People saw them, though, at the fringe of the beams of light out in the lot or down by the river at the landing on one of the benches out of the fluorescent lights.

At the same time Mr. Dawson heard that he was in love with Dion, he heard that Dion had quit the basketball team. He went into the back room after Denise and her friends had left the store and leaned his forehead into his hand. They are in love, Denise had said. Nothing from her mouth had ever interested him before this statement. He tried not to think of Natalie. She ran track; she had been into the store with her mother, with Ron, Ron with acne. When he closed his eyes he saw her tanned thigh last summer as she sat on the bench outside the store, blue shorts scrunched up above a pale line and the knob of her shoulder beneath her yellow sweater, and the curve at the corner of her mouth that would harden into a battered smirk, he knew, by the time she was his age—by the time she was half his age.

That afternoon the basketball team stood on the court in their practice gear, not bouncing the ball, staring off in different directions, in disbelief that Dion had quit for her. Mr. Dawson was late; he was never late. They couldn't believe Dion was with her right now. Maybe off in his brother's car or at his cousin's house, where both parents worked, or off in Vaughn Woods by the pond, or out by the pit waiting for it to get dark, or down by the river near the landing waiting for it to get dark. Any of them would have traded places with Dion. The game of basketball suddenly seemed pointless next to the thought of his hand on her hip, and her in her green slacks and yellow sweater burying her face in his flannel shirt, curling her fingers into his back, closing her eyes to hide, even from herself, how much she loved him.

When Mr. Dawson arrived, the team was sitting on their practice balls under the bench with their heads low. They hadn't noticed him come in, fingers splayed out in the air. The game of basketball seemed to him a cruel drama written to parody his frustration, and now he was forced to be its director.

They had only been together for a day, but it seemed to Natalie as if they had been together forever. There seemed no need to tell him anything; with one glance she knew he knew the years they had not been together were little more than preparation for this moment. She could tell from the turn of his hand hanging out the window of his brother's car what he was thinking about. He was thinking about her. When he looked at her, she had to look away. When he thought about her, she was thinking about him. When he looked away, she looked at him; when she looked away, she could feel him looking at her. She realized now that she had always been looking for him, even though they had been in school together sitting just a few seats away, standing across the playground from each other, he with his friends at the corner of the school parking lot by the Dumpsters, she with hers by the swing sets. She had seen him but not seen him. She had been alive but not alive, until now.

On the second day, she was not in school in her linen yellow shorts her mother had sewn together from Mrs. Nason's old drapes. I turned around, and in my mind there they were, pulled tightly around her thigh by the angle of her leg.

Two days later there was a teachers' meeting after school to discuss the situation at which no one, least of all the principal, a tall man with Baptist visions, had anything to say. What can we do? Mr. Wally pleaded, his voice gruffer than usual. This was not, in other words, a passing thing. They could not just hold their breaths. The basketball team would not get to the championship, and every day, the men knew, glancing quickly at one another, they would have to see her leaving at the end of the day, as the days got warmer toward June, in her pink flannel shorts, or the blue satin ones, and the white silk shirt or the tank tops, the red bands holding her hair back from her cheeks, walking down the hill, no with Ron, but to be with him in al the dark crannies of the towi wrapped in nothing but his old jack et, arcing her pale stomach towar the moon, her open mouth barel giving voice to her thought: Dion.

"What about your mother?" Dio asked as they were walking by th river. "She comes to pick you up out side the library."

She was surprised he knew this that he had been paying attention t her long before today. Maybe sh was right about the way love worked it had been planned all along.

"My mother can wait," she sai and pulled him forward, down to ward the trees. She leaned into hin with her hands flat against hi chest. He couldn't breathe. Her lip tasted a little of spaghetti sauce. H pulled her closer, and she let he body stand flat against his for a mo ment before pushing away. H reached for her pants, but sh pushed his hand back, explaining t him that love has its natural course She took both his hands in hers an stood very close to him withou touching him. She explained that i they rushed love it would shatte like glass.

"Like glass," he repeated, amaze at the way she put it. She was like n one he had ever met. He closed hi eyes as she touched his face, covere his lips with her fingers. When h opened his eyes again, she was run ning back up the trail.

"I'll see you tomorrow," she yelled and was gone.

The rotting smell of the riverban came to him, and he noticed for th first time that it was cloudy an growing cool quickly. But everythin seemed different, somehow lumines cent, awash with mercurial light. H sat down on a rock and watched th water swirl in the current.

In the following days she formed a list of things she wanted to have an do and be without Ron. A boat, bu not any boat, a giant motor sailer they could take all the way down the coast to Florida, so big there coul be a storm and they wouldn't ever notice down in their cabin below where there would be a fireplace an a television/VCR in one. Wh

ould be sailing the boat.' Dion anted to know. They would hire omeone for that. But the rest of heir life was imagined in modest proportions: dogs, golden collie mix- , not pure at all, three children, a ouse where everyone had a bed- oom and there was one extra for a uest, and some land with a view of he hills around town. She didn't ant to live down by the river or so ose to a neighbor that you could e in their window at night. She ad never thought of living some- here else? He had thought of Mon- na. Montana—the word sounded ewed in her mouth. God, she said, aking her head. Other places. Gar- ner? Farmingdale? Monmouth? hose places, the only other places he knew, were bad enough. Imagine hat people were like even farther way. No, she wanted to go to Flori- a, though. Not to live, just to go here as the Nasons did every winter, aking their daughter, Julie, with hem so that she came back with a an, even if she did look like a squir- el. And no matter what time of year was she would have fresh flowers n every room of the house. This dea from her mother, of how people eally lived. And a horse for her laughter, in a red barn. And light blue carpeting in every room. Our oom, she said, with a canopy bed, ut he didn't know what one was. It as a kind of roof, like a tent. He hdn't see the point but pictured it nyway, a bed with a tent in a room hat already had a ceiling and above hat a roof. He had pictured a cabin n Montana where you could look up nd see the nails from the roof shin- les coming through. And lavender, he said. No one would be allowed to moke. Every room would smell of avender. Like me, she said, and ressed her wrist to his nose. This vas the smell of their future.

None of us had been in love, not eally, until now. Anything we had alled love came back to us as mock- ry in the face of this sudden flight rom reason. Andy had said he was n love with Missy, and it was a hame Missy was not in love with im. A daily lament rose from him ike the steam of the heat from the ipes at school. Andy's mother hit

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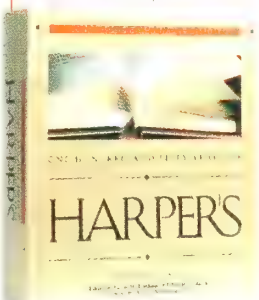
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the counter with her fist. "They're too young," she said, talking about Natalie and Dion, and we knew she was talking about their tongues running along the inside of each other's teeth and the sudden, anxious too tight grip of her hand between his legs, and the taste of each other's skin, and the smell of each other's bodies, and the feel of him slipping inside her and of her settling down over him, the shape of her mouth, the shape of his. She was talking about their bodies but thinking about the words they had used. Everyone knew. "Love," she finally growled, as if the creature itself had risen from her dreams to take over her kitchen. She gripped a package of spaghetti as if it were a club and stared at the wall, paralyzed by the idea of them out there.

They hadn't been going out for a week when she got in his brother's car and rode out to the next county. They ate in a mall at a Howard Johnson. She ordered an ice cream sundae and he ordered a grilled cheese sandwich to go in case she wanted to go all of a sudden. She ate her sundae and ordered a milk shake; he couldn't eat. He bought her a blue shirt in a fancy store, a boutique. It's a nice shirt, he said. It looks nice on you. It's a blouse, she said, turning for him in the parking lot with her eyes closed. A blouse, he repeated.

She made him drive faster, clinging to his arm, with her lips pecking gently against the nape of his neck. God, she said, God. Her breath smelled of chocolate. His eyes watered when she rested her hand on his knee and started to rub his thigh [illegible] She rubbed until his leg burned. Her stomach rose and [illegible] the speedometer. Dion pressed down harder on the pedal. The road to Monmouth was straight and rolling, the Firebird rising and falling as if with the swells of a heavy sea, the shocks rattling in a drumroll. He shouldn't, he said, but he didn't. What's in Monmouth? she [illegible] but didn't want to know. There was no reason to know, even though she had heard and did know. The bar everyone had heard about, The Chanticlear, which no one, at least no one from Bigelow JH, had been to. We heard it smelled of her cellar after a flood, the sweet twinge of wet walls and soaked carpets on a warm day.

It was a low windowless building tucked under a maple tree between the side of the road and a trickling stream, no light outside except the one Bud sign. This beer, golden from the tap, was sweeter than what Ron had given her, stolen from his father's icebox. She sat in the back of the room, far away from the others at the pool table, and stared down into her glass. She took a sip and put the mug down. He came over from the pool table and traced his finger along her lower lip, leaned over to kiss her. He loved her in that yellow sweater, her breasts weighted, pushing against the soft fabric, her yellow hair, each strand distinct, falling around her chin. She didn't want him to put on any music, she didn't want to play pool, she didn't want to have another beer, she didn't want to sit alone so many miles from home, she didn't want to be sitting under the bar light, dissected in its brightness at the end of this numberless dark road. So he took the keys to the car, the hell with the rest, and they drove all the way up to Monmouth over the Kennebec River and back again.

They held hands all the way; he said nothing and she loved the way he said it. She didn't want to go home, and so they kept going in another direction. All the roads looked the same at night. She said it clearly, to him, LOVE, just before dawn, and he was afraid, as they parked by a river, farther away from home than she had ever been, of touching her. So she touched him as she had seen herself touch him in her mind, and just as she had imagined he held absolutely still. If he said anything, he said what she thought he would say, he said what she wanted him to say, what we all wanted to hear, things he had never said to anyone before, words he had never thought before, whose meaning he would not have been able to explain but felt as he said them as clearly as he felt he breath on his neck, as surely sweet a her hair was soft, as clearly as he fel he was not the same and would ne ever want anything, anyone, a much as he wanted her.

The night she didn't come home the first night ever, people thought her bruised and bleeding in the cor ner of some motel room halfway be tween Hallowell and Mississippi Others thought of her in the Hyat in Boston, or they wouldn't wait s long, or the Marriott in Portsmoutl Or they were on a cruise, on *The Sco tia Prince* headed for Halifax, gam bling in black tie and satin dress And still others said, shaking thei heads: No, no, she was gone, lon gone from us, lying somewhere b the railway tracks. The man in th caboose will find her the next tim we hear the Boston and Maine. She somewhere between Haymarket an Bangor, bleeding into the gravel, he linens smudged, silk torn, the blus of her cheeks chalk white, and Dio halfway to Mexico. Andy was th only one who got it right, the mor obvious answer: They lay side by sid in the back of his brother's parke car by the side of a field in the nex county. She pulled the blanket be neath her chin as he pulled her hea against his chest and ran a single fin ger through her hair. When she tilt ed her head, only her bangs and he lips caught the moonlight.

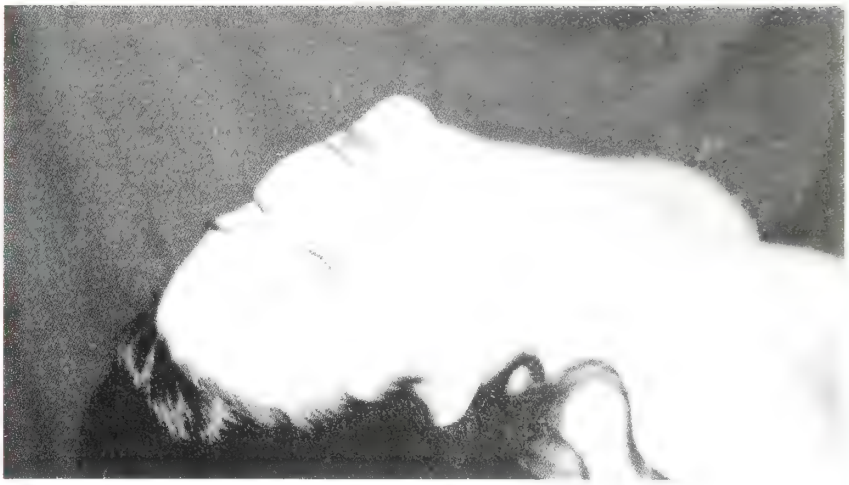
Everywhere Andy and I went wa in search of her, just as Mr. Dawso drove up and down Litchfield Roa and all the way across town to th quarry and back, saying to himself h was on an errand when he was reall hoping, just for a moment, to catch glimpse of her. Her father was ou looking for her now, too, in th truck, rifle at his side. Two of her un cles were on opposite sides of th town, covering all the roads leadin in and out. Her mother told herse she had known the time woul come; but not like this, she said t herself, not with him. She ha thought of Ron and Natalie's wed ding, the white dress she would sew (had already spent hours, days, years shaping in her mind). Even if the found her, she would not be th same now.

The members of the basketball
am, sure now that they would lose
ne final game of the season and miss
ne playoffs, were home with their
rents watching television or eating
otato chips or talking on the phone
r listening to their parents talking
the next room or lying on their
acks thinking of Dion out there
ith her. They listened to the sound
f crickets and cars passing and
outs from up the street and dogs
arking and pots clinking in the sink
nd footsteps of sisters on stairways
hile they thought of him out there
uching her neck with the tips of
is fingers before looking away to
rive the car or order another beer
r wave to his brother, as if the prac-
icalities of living could distract him,
ven for a second, from where he
ould touch her next.

"He took her, he took her," Natal-
e's mother moaned over and over to
ner husband and his brothers.

"He dragged her off. He threw her
h his car and took her away." Natal-
e's father was on the phone, calling
he police and everyone he knew,
which was everyone, the fathers of
ll the basketball players, fathers of
laughters who were Natalie's
riends, younger brothers of fathers
f Natalie's friends and basketball
layers, and fathers of girls not yet
ld enough to be in junior high,
hough when they were another
Dion would be waiting for them.

All over town parents of girls who
would be like or wanted to be like
ner and of boys who might think of
loing what he had done lay in bed
staring at the ceiling, saying a few
words to each other: What do you
hink? We'll find them tomorrow.
What will you do? Don't know. Do
ou think she's all right? I really
lon't know. They didn't mention
what they were thinking, nor did
heir children, listening to them talk
rom the next room, give voice to
heir thoughts of what might be hap-
ening out there, what he might be
loing to her. No image, no story,
nce started, would complete itself
n their minds: she was tied in the
ack seat, the purple, no the pink
ilk shirt, ripped down the front and
ner pale breasts shivering in the
noonlight with her nipples like



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NOTES FOR "ON AIR"

Puzzle by Dan Notmon

ACROSS: 7. pack(y)s, rev.; 10. a-gent; 11. tee-te(e)-r; 12. Z-it; 15. hidden; 16. mat. red letters; 17. earth; 18. [illegible]; 19. hidden; 23. [illegible]; 29. *; 31. *; 33. kind-red; 36. quart-E.T.; 39. (not)ably; 40. [illegible].

DOWN: 1. "s(t)O"; 2. [illegible] rev.; 3. [illegible]; 4. [illegible]; 6. [illegible] OK; 8. [illegible]; 13. [illegible]; 14. [illegible]; 21. [illegible]; 24. gin-a; 25. *; 26. hidden in reverse; 27. homophone; 28. two rings.; 30. x cell; 32. g-abs; 34. hidden in reverse; 35. *; 37. r(otary)-our; 38. tip-I.

shorties on cream pie. Where was he? Hovering above her. Just a hand comes into view, he was gentle now that he had what he wanted. Or she was running down the road in front of his headlights. They had pulled off the road, and she had gotten away, though just for a moment. Her blouse had been stripped off and was lying torn somewhere out of view, probably in the back seat or on the side of the road, and she ran just in her white panties with the cloth riding up between her cheeks above the tan line of her bikini, the point where everyone's eyes had previously been turned back briefly exposed now. Her head turned, her face flushed and mouth open, her eyes wide and wild, like a cat in high beams: he was catching up. And when he did catch up she would be in the back seat or on the side of the road, her back pressed against the ground, her breath taken away by the weight of his body, all her mother's clothing, so carefully sewn together, made well enough for her daughter's daughter's children to wear as costumes of a previous era, lying in shreds, and her face tied in a knot, biting her lower lip, eyes pulled into her skull, as he lowered himself

In our minds love had gone bad, but not in theirs. "No," she said, pushing off his chest. "Not here. I want it to be perfect." He didn't understand, though he obeyed her, and she pulled him back against her on the seat where they lay together, her lips traveling over his face. "Just hold still," she said. "I always knew," she said, "it would be like this." He didn't know what *it* was or what *this* was, only that he had been chosen. He closed his eyes as she pressed his face against her sweater. All he could smell was her. "I love you," she said again and again until the sound of her voice covered him like a blanket. "I want to hear you say it." He said he had already said it, but she wanted him to say it again, so he did, pressing it into her sweater, into her breasts. "You do," she said. "You do."

She told him to keep his hands at his sides no matter what she did. He smiled at her, as if she were kidding. You trust me, she said. It was a question. He nodded in a way that made her love him even more. He was her child. He asked her what was the matter. Her eyes had watered. She told him nothing and ran her hand over his eyelids, smoothing them closed. "Hold still." He nodded. "You nodded!" she scolded, and he tried not to smile. She sat on his lap, feeling her shorts ride up. She ran her finger along his forearm. His fingers twitched. Abruptly she lay her palms flat against his chest and pushed, angling her chin up. She took one shoulder in each hand and ran her hands down his arms as if she were wringing out wet clothes. He grinned. "Stop that!" she said. He couldn't hold still. "Hold still." He did this time. She undid her blouse and bra, then put one hand on his shoulder, one against the side of his cheek, and lowered her chest against his face, wrapping her arms around the back of his head. He raised his hands; she pushed them back down. He raised them again; she took them and sat on them. "There," she said. She leaned forward, pulling his nose between her breasts, his mustache tickling her skin, and found the edge of his knuckle between her legs.

They rocked together as if in an embrace of grief until her breaths came in quick, panicked bursts, as if she was short of breath, not him. She squeezed the back of his head so tightly that he yelled into her chest. She let go and rolled off him, backing against the far door, pulling her blouse over her chest. Her face was scrunched up, smeared.

"Don't tell anyone what happened," she mumbled.

His mind raced for something to say, not the wrong thing. "What?" he said. "What happened?"

She shook her head. "I don't know," she said. Whatever had happened it wasn't his fault. It was hers. She was cold. The windows had steamed up but were now frosted over. "It's all right," she said, thinking of the movies, TV. It had all gone just like that until now. She tried to think of what would happen next. "I'm scared," she said, trying to follow the script. "Hold me." He moved over on the seat. Already part of her didn't want him to touch her, but this couldn't be true.

She knew when she fell in love with him that she would be in love forever, just as she knew when she woke up in the back seat the next morning, cramped and headachy, and looked at Dion sleeping with his mouth open that she was no longer in love with him and never would be. She opened the door and stepped out into the damp morning air. She began to think of Ron's long fingers resting on the steering wheel of his father's Mercury, his thin legs and gray slacks as they drove to the movies and held hands in the dark. She thought of his thin lips brushing against hers, his hand resting carefully on her shoulder, and of his parents reading in bed waiting for him to come home, his father's air-conditioning.

Dion stretched, scrunching his eyes, limbs snaking around the corners of the seats up to the back dash. His T-shirt pulled up to show his stomach. He opened his eyes and watched her standing in the open doorway. He smiled.

"We should go," she said. "I'm afraid someone will find us here." He shrugged. Obviously he cared nothing for what people thought. How had she missed this before? He moved like an oaf, like her father, slowly opening the door, as if there were no hurry, digging the keys out of his pocket. Finally he started the car and launched them forward, speeding. At least they were moving. She rolled the window down and stuck her face into the breeze as into a splash of water. Poor Ron. What was he doing now?

"I'm not feeling well," she said, making a show suddenly of holding her stomach.

He leaned forward over the wheel and shot her a glance. "What's wrong?"

"I don't know," she said irritably, as if it were all his fault. He recoiled a little against his door and leaned his elbow out the window, steering with one thumb.

As they neared her house, he

s arted to get nervous, taking the
heel in two hands.

"When am I going to see you
gain?"

She looked at the dashboard as if
ne hadn't heard. He pulled over to
ne side of the road and turned to
er, the words she had been say-
ng—his own name, and *I love you, I love you*—playing through his head. He wasn't going to say them, they were her words, and he didn't want to tell her to say them, but he needed her to keep saying them.

She put her hand on the door. He watched it resting there. "I can walk from here," she said and stepped out of the car.

"Where are you going?" He screamed so loudly she stumbled off the road. She could see her house from here, across the road and down the field.

"I don't love you anymore."

He was out of the car now with his hands on the roof, just looking at her.

She repeated it. Her bellow drew out and continued as a groan as she bent over with her knees together and hands pulled around her stomach. Tears burst down her cheeks, her blond strands sticking to her lips.

It seemed now that he must have known all along what would happen. He could have made a noise like the sudden roar of gravel pouring from a dump truck at the construction site where his father worked. This much force and more had built up in his chest. He could have crushed her words with his own. He could have screamed so loudly she would have ceased to exist, but he was silent

She sensed him stumbling through the field after her. Her mother came to the window, saw her, and called her father, who arrived at the window with his shotgun. Seeing him, she ran away from the house toward the woods. Her mother came out onto the front steps and screamed, "Natalie!" just as she tripped and vanished into the blond straw. By the time she was back on her feet, her father was on the phone, calling. Everyone left their phones hanging and ran for their trucks and cars, funneling from Central Street, Winthrop Road, and

Number of people who have been to space: 390

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Water Street onto Litchfield Road. Dion stumbled on a log and twisted his ankle. She was out of sight. These were her woods. He had grown up playing here.

He stood with his arms apart, hunkered down, and screamed her name as loud as he could. She stopped running and looked up at the sky washing over the treetops. They could probably hear her name all the way in Bath, she thought. He loved her, he really did. She ran on. But stopped when her name sounded again and again, moaning through the trees like a foghorn, his voice seeming more desperate and distant. He was headed in the wrong direction. She almost called out to him.

Mr. Dawson opened his door and stepped out before putting his truck in park; it lurched forward slightly before he could hit the brake. No one was watching. His neighbor, Mr. Shumaker, ran across the lawn, taking long even strides while checking the chamber of his shotgun. Their boots crunched over the dried leaves and grass with the sound of falling water; all of them headed toward Natalie's father standing at the edge of the woods. "This way," he called and ran into the shadows. They all stopped running when Dion's voice called for Natalie. His voice, her name. They leaned over their knees, listening to their own heavy breathing. The smell of their own musty heat escaping from beneath their shirt collars.

They had guns. He stopped calling her name. She turned at the edge of Nason's field when she heard the silence. When she listened harder she heard the voices of her father, her uncles, their friends, and the fathers of her friends calling to one another. For a moment she wanted to take it all back. She did love him. Then she wanted to take it all the way back to never having loved him to begin with. She couldn't say now how it had started. Ron would never forgive her. No one would.

They caught up with him, all the men shouting at once, stumbling and waving. Dion couldn't hear [illegible] only fragments of words and phrases. Finally Natalie's father appeared, and Dion could see the resemblance in the shape of his face, thin but sagging near the jowls. Her father was the only one not shouting as the rest formed a circle around him, the ends of their waving gun barrels like dark eyes. Dion raised his hands as the police had told him to one night in Monmouth. He closed his eyes and pictured the house he and Natalie were going to have, and the red barn with the horse, every room smelling of her wrist, the bed with the tent, the boat with the captain taking them down the coast to the sun. He could see it all so clearly it seemed as if these things had already happened and he was looking back now after a lifetime together.

"David Dion." It was her father's voice rising above the others. The father had a right to speak. He was the one wronged; anything he did might be excused later. Dion looked briefly at her father and the others. Her father's eyes darted around the woods, skipping off Dion's face every few seconds. Dion lowered his chin and closed his eyes again, holding his arms out so they would know he was unarmed. It seemed he had been waiting his entire short life to accept blame. "David Dion." His name again, and the picture Dion had formed on the backs of his closed lids of her father pointing a finger at him, eyes red with anger, almost with tears, was more accurate than the real thing. Dion waited for his name again, imagining her father's mouth opening, his jagged teeth bared. Instead there was the deafening crack of a shotgun blast, and in the total silence that followed Dion found himself floating in the treetops, uncertain if he was dreaming or dying. The maple and oak leaves turned toward him and shivered. He saw the field beyond the woods where a burst of wind sliced a path through the grass like an invisible hand combing through hair. At the edge of the field near the road Natalie stood looking back. She made him so sad he had to look away, into the sun. When he looked back down it was too late: the image of the sun was burned into everything he saw.

I was outside our house throwing a tennis ball against the wall, pretending I was the star of a baseball game with scouts ready to sign me up, and was just winding up for another pitch when I heard the crack echo across town. My mother flew out the back door and grabbed hold of me, searching my arms and chest to see if I had been hit.

Mrs. Dawson dropped a sandwich roll at Dawson's store, ran outside with the customers, and looked up at the sky. Natalie's mother fell to the floor in her kitchen. In her mind they were all dead: her husband, her daughter, and Dion. The police chief stood up from his desk and looked at the receptionist. He had been afraid of what might happen if people took the law into their own hands. This was the consummation of their relief.

When Dion opened his eyes he was still there, kneeling before his accusers, handfuls of dirt and pebbles sprinkled over his shoulders. All the men's eyes searched his body for wounds or blood, but there were none. Natalie's uncle had fired his shotgun by accident, blowing a hole in the ground and kicking up a cloud, nothing more.

Gazing back across the field to the woods where he lay dying, Natalie found it impossible to accept at first that they had shot him. But then it made sense, and she decided she would bear the mark of his death by never smiling again for the rest of her life. For her, the siren approaching from across town was the sound of an ambulance arriving too late; the second siren, which came a moment later, the sound of the police coming for her. She raised her chin and removed the strands of hair from her face to see over the treetops if Dion's soul was rising out of his body into the sky. In court, as in her prayers to him, she would beg for mercy, for pardon. She would admit everything, absolving everyone but herself. For a few moments this morning she had been a fool thinking love was not real, thinking she could live without him, and now she had lost everything.

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LETTERS

Continued from page 9

number of abortions in France since RU-486 was introduced there is 1988 : –4."

The eighth and ninth lines should have read as follows: "Percentage by which Texas's incarceration rate has increased since 1991 for every 1 percent drop in its crime rate : 4"; "Percentage by which New York's incarceration rate has increased since then for every 1 percent drop in its crime rate : 0.7."

In "Fortune's Smile," James McManus's report on the World Series of Poker [December 2000], the fifth street card that cost him the $900,000 pot against Hasan Habib was the 4♣, not, as stated, the 4♥.

March Index Sources

1–4 Special Oversight Board for Department of Defense Investigations of Gulf War Chemical and Biological Incidents (Washington); **5** *Harper's* research; **6** Center for Strategic Budgetary Assessments (Washington)/U.S. Agency for International Development (Washington); **7** Elections Canada (Ottawa); **8,9** National Electoral Council (Caracas, Venezuela); **10** Radio Super (Bogotá, Colombia); **11** Procter & Gamble Co. (Cincinnati); **12,13** Institute for Policy Studies (Washington); **14** We[illegible] mergers.com (San Francisco), **15** Up with People (Broomfield, Colo.); **16–18** Securities Industry Foundation for Economic Education (N.Y.C.); **19** Trapholt Kunstmuseum (Kolding, Denmark); **20** Alberta Ferret (London); **21** Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food (London); **22** Office International des Epizooties (Paris); **23** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Atlanta); **24** Food and Drug Administration (Rockville, Md.); **25** Spanish Paralympic Committee (Madrid); **26** Death Penalty Information Center (Washington); **27** American Association on Mental Retardation (Washington); **28,29** Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center (Seattle); **30** Public Works and Government Services Canada (Ottawa); **31** Chicago Police Department; **32** Organic Trade Association (Greenfield, Mass.); **33** Krispy Kreme Doughnuts (Winston-Salem, N.C.); **34** Montana Department of Agriculture (Helena); **35** U.S. Department of Agriculture; **36** Montana Secretary of State (Helena), **37** National Institute of Standards and Technology (Gaithersburg, Md.); **38** *New York Times*, December 24, 2000, **39** Duke University Medical Center (Durham, N.C.); **40** *Time* (N.Y.C.)/The Public Opinion Foundation (Moscow).

Biased Puzzle

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

Enter answers at grid coordinates. A quotation appears in all but the shaded squares, which contain the author's name. The first letters of the answers spell out the source. Every other letter in the diagram appears twice in the answers, which include one proper name and a British spelling at Y. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 89.



A. E2, M13, L12, O8, E8, O13, K1
Regret about tied-up income (7)

B. I3, L1, H6, G13, N7, J14, A4
Identifying with energy in *My Way* (7)

C. H3, C3, O12, I13, H12, B11, G1
Louis's dwelling, in talk, on Evian water (7)

D. B2, J12, M10, F7, B8, N3, A15
Draft what umpires call item in play (7)

E. J5, D8, E4, O1, J10, O10, B14
Return is excellent in a tenant (7)

F. K12, H2, O6, J9, E7
One who gets over engagement, initially (5)

G. I11, L8, C15, D9, G10, L6, F14, M12
Present (uh!) during mob-style killing (8)

H. O4, K7, J11, F4, O15, N5, C5, G6
Swallowing in, marine life surfaces (8)

I. I10, L14, K4, A10, C1, D13, I11, M7
Wibbling one takes on a whole lot (8)

J. E1, O2, B15, F12, E3, M15, E14, A11, G2, B6
Folk do boo a baby-sitter loudly (10)

K. K14, E13, H9, J4, F4, F11, K1, J15, L10
Contempt, in essence, is linked by (_____)' (9)

L. K15, H11, L7, C15, L5, D7, M1, J2
Southern nipper holds off ticket-tearer (8)

M. M14, G5, J1, E11, K9, I8, M2, B6
Interior thrown out in University Club (8)

N. F13, B2, F15, G3, E9, E5, A9, B1, D4, O9
It's for generating C-F-O's hours, perhaps' (10)

O. H13, O11, L2, B12, J14, H4, C8
Brought up pitiful, faceless (7)

P. N6, B3, D11, F8, D6, E5, N10, A13
Carve happiest words in stone (8)

Q. E13, B13, A1, K8, E9, N12, K3, J7, D2
Bandleader and non-P.C. army officer? (9)

R. M9, E12, H14, M3, I18, E15, N11, E10
Ennng I me fade-out (8)

S. C10, K13, B14, A1, L3, I7, F2, B8, N14, H1
Crime committed preparing to change a tire? (10)

T. H2, N15, N10, G3, L14, D5, D14, C9, H7
Circle where it's "Dancing or else!" (9)

U. G7, K3, D12, O14, H10, M5, G15, K11, A6
Monthly bills suit it — he outrageously (9)

V. E6, E15, J10, F9, K5, A12, G13, H8, C5, G11
Senatorial fudging' (10)

W. A7, N8, N4, G1, N13, O7, L2, L11, G7, D3, A9, B10
With care, your old-time holding should mature (12)

X. F1, A3, A11, D14, I9, N2, B7, O11, O1, M8
Knowing about sin, returned shady income on time (10)

Y. H14, M13, O3, F5, C9, E1, I15, G9, E7
Clever he is, if set to make a thing work like a charm (9)

Z. C11, I2, J6, M7, A5, J13, H12, B4, N8
Run into it: the wild one making a score (9)

AA. C3, N1, D6, N9, D12, C13, L4, G12
Work out any hitch in [illegible] (8)

BB. C12, D15, M1, G9, I5, F1, L7, I6, O3, B1C
Trotters late [illegible] (7)

CC. O13, I4, H10, L9, G15, E3, M6
Made one undignified, dropping out from 3 to 6 (7)

DD. D4, K11, L8, M9, J3, C11, O5, I13, I15
Queen, knotting finer tie, takes time (9)

EE. M3, G5, I12, I15, N2, C9
Stick around in . . . in a 707 (6)

FF. L4, J8, H6, C4, K5, M11, H15
Error on passport conceals heroin affliction (7)

GG. C6, J8, I5, A7, H4, A2, F12, B5
Canines look at effective [illegible] (8)

HH. C14, M11, L10, C7, C2, N4, J2, F10, L13
Mock A, E, I, O, or U? Listen, I didn't do that! (9)

II. O15, A8, B12, I4, K2, E11, F14, C7, C1
Living room set in rocky coastline (9)

JJ. D1, J6, D10, N12, B4, I1, B9, I15
Affiliate let honeymoon stores show for hours (8)

KK. F6, G4, L12, I3, I6, M5, K7, K15, D2, A3, D8, M15, I14, I9 They can make you stare, vend items! (14)

LL. A5, I1, A15, G14, K9, M4
Idiot others [illegible] by those people (6)

MM. I5, J12, F3, O7, F6, N14, F10, A13, G8, K13
Put [illegible] for good? Oriental [illegible] (10)

NN. K6, N6, A14, D10, G11, F2, O5, C13
Fur coat impresses your family (8)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Prized Puzzle," *Harper's Magazine*, [illegible]. If you subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your mailing label. [illegible] solutions picked at random will receive one year of subscription to *Harper's*. [illegible]

KISSINGER: THE ART OF THE DEAL

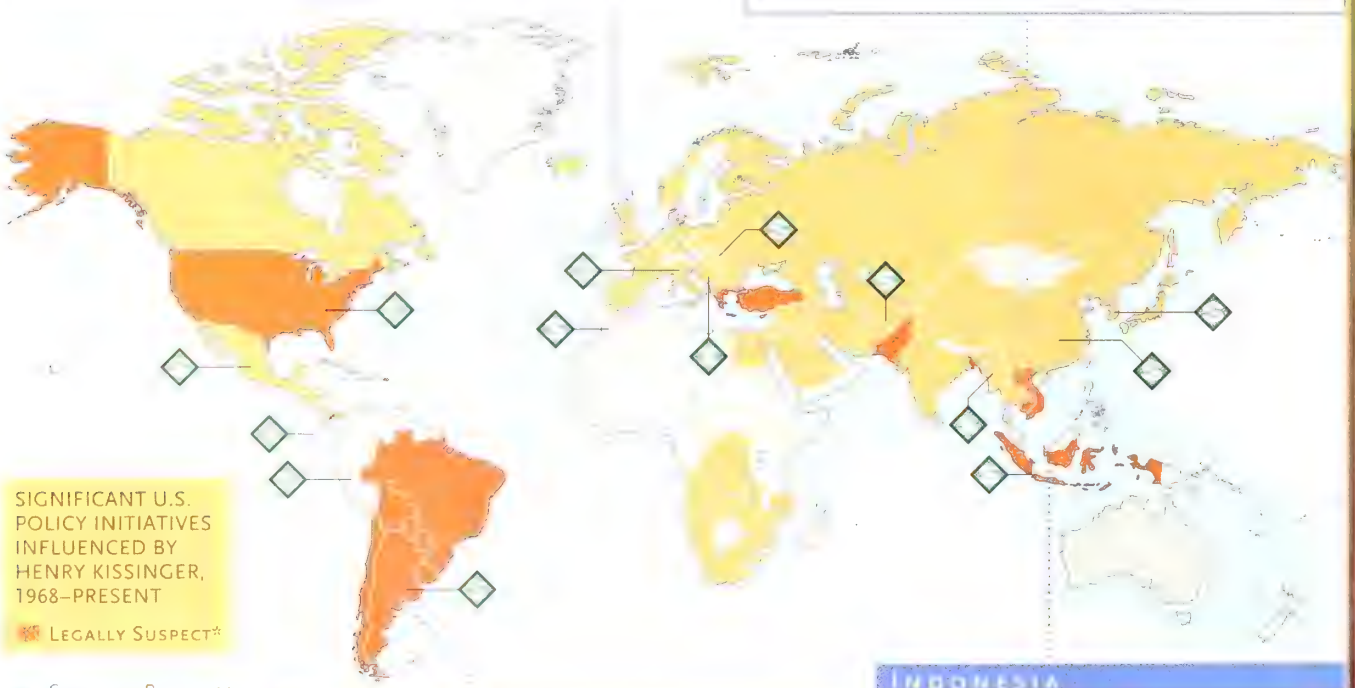
In the time-honored tradition of translating government service into private gain, few men can rival Henry Kissinger for audacit and geographic scope. Since leaving his post as secretary of state in 1977, Kissinger has expanded his influence (and income) f beyond mere punditry. In 1982, he founded Kissinger Associates, a firm that has offered strategic consulting to at least thirt multinational corporations—many of which have appointed him to their advisory boards. He is also often hired as a political ac visor by the United States and other governments, and continues to dispense advertisements of his own wisdom-for-hire in perso on television, and in print, including a syndicated column. Although his annual income (once estimated at $8 million) may fall short the earnings of other former public officials, what sets Kissinger apart can be seen below in the reach and confluence of his financial dea ngs and foreign-policy involvements. The most questionable examples of the latter, as analyzed by Christopher Hitchens in "The Cas Against Henry Kissinger" (see page 49), exhibit enough disregard of state sovereignty and human rights to be legally suspect on a numb of counts. Such abuse of power is nothing new, but few of its practitioners have commanded the financial and military resource Kissinger has known, and surely none has had the chance to plead his case as widely, or as successfully

Yugoslavia

In 1984, ex-ambassador to Yugoslavia Lawrence Eagleburger became president of Kissinger Associates and signed two lucrative clients: a construction concern later fined for illegal deals with Libya, and the conglomerate that made the Yugo mini-car, whose factory provided support for Milosevic's war machine. A decade later, Kissinger was encouraging a policy of non-intervention in the region's crises.

China

Kissinger is famous for his carefully constructed excuses for 1989's Tiananmen Square massacre and his opposition to linking U.S. trade policy with human rights in China. Less famous is China Ventures, an investment partnership he created six months before the massacre. In the 1980s, Kissinger used his ties to the Deng regime to further the regional commercial interests of Chase Manhattan Bank, ITT, and H. J. Heinz.



SIGNIFICANT U.S. POLICY INITIATIVES INFLUENCED BY HENRY KISSINGER, 1968–PRESENT

LEGALLY SUSPECT*

SELECTED BUSINESS CONNECTIONS, 1982–[illegible]

*actions that technically [illegible]

[illegible]s, Henry Kissinger," in the [illegible] and March 2001 issues

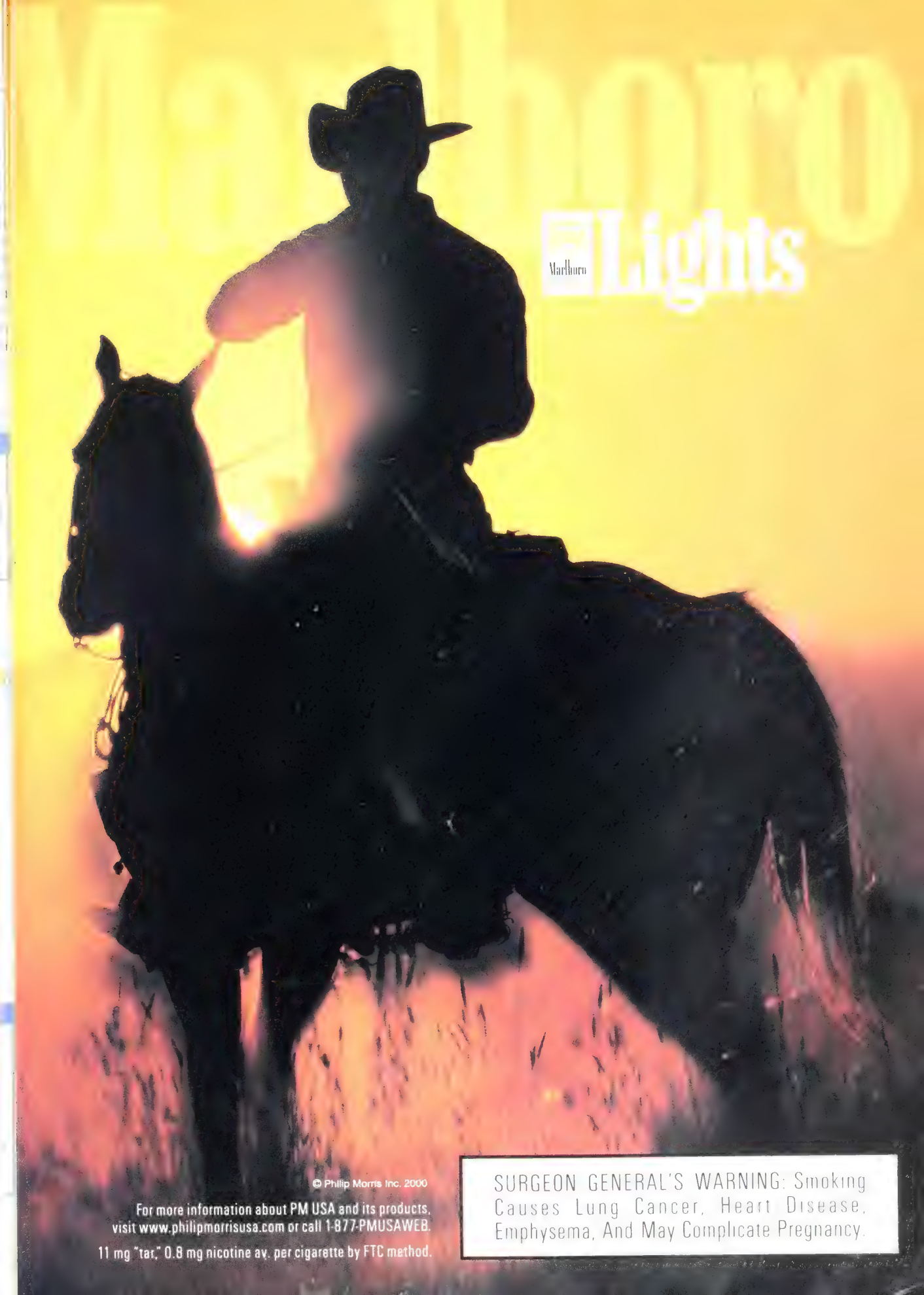
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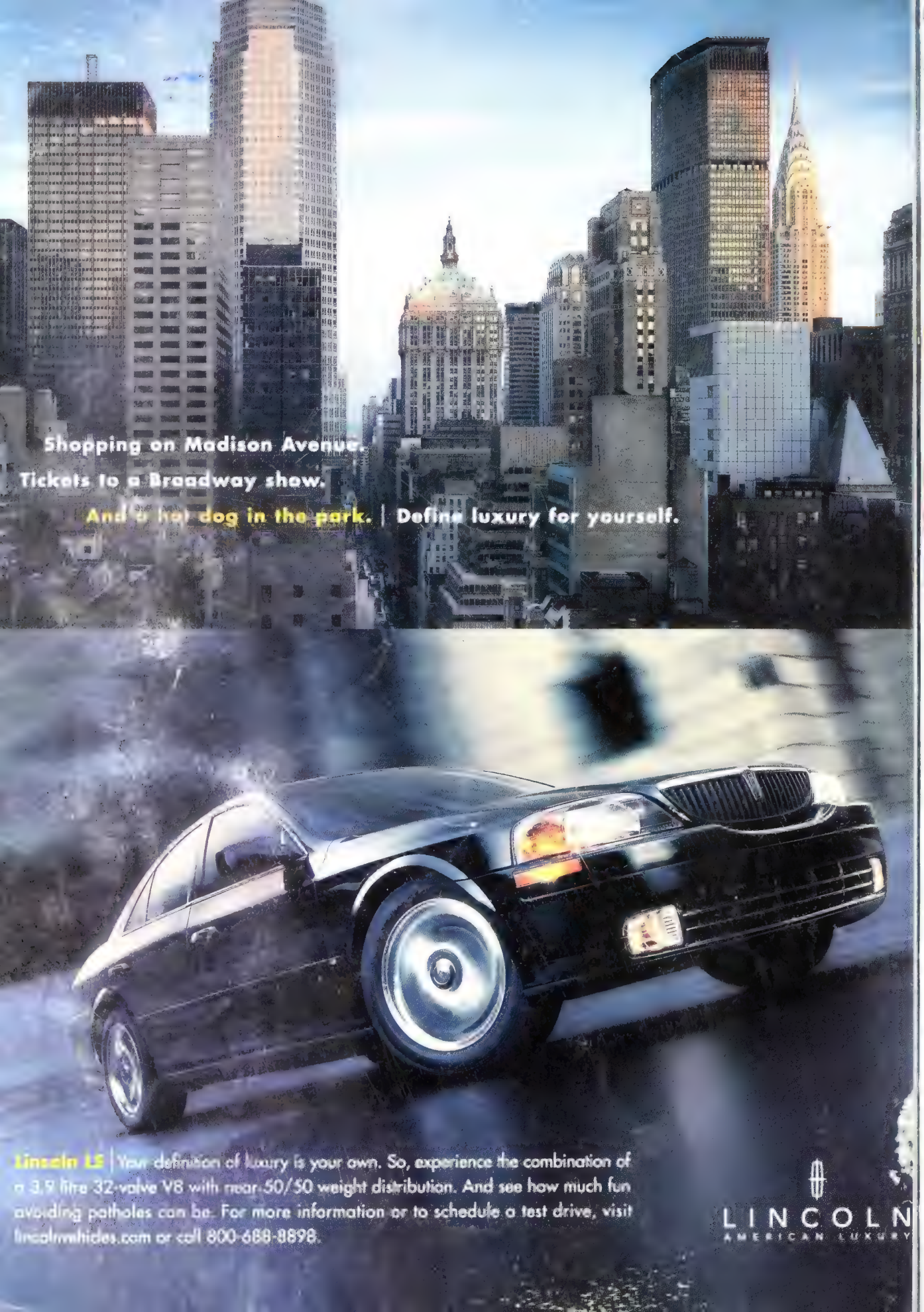
As secretary of state, Kissinger countenanced assassination, human-rights abuse, and the subversion of democracy in Argentina, Chile, and other Latin American countries. As a consultant, he successfully lobbied for multinational corporations in Argentina, as well as in Panama and Peru under the Noriega and Fujimori regimes, and in Mexico under Salinas, whose corrupt administration he lavishly praised in his syndicated column.

Indonesia

Under the Ford Administration, Kissinger met with Suharto on the eve of Indonesia's 1975 invasion of East Timor. He returned to the country last year to advise incoming president Wahid. In the interim, he helped mining giant Freeport-McMoRan secure a thirty-year license for Indonesia's Grasberg gold mine, whose operation has since been linked to environmental and human-rights violations—charges that Wahid has ignored.

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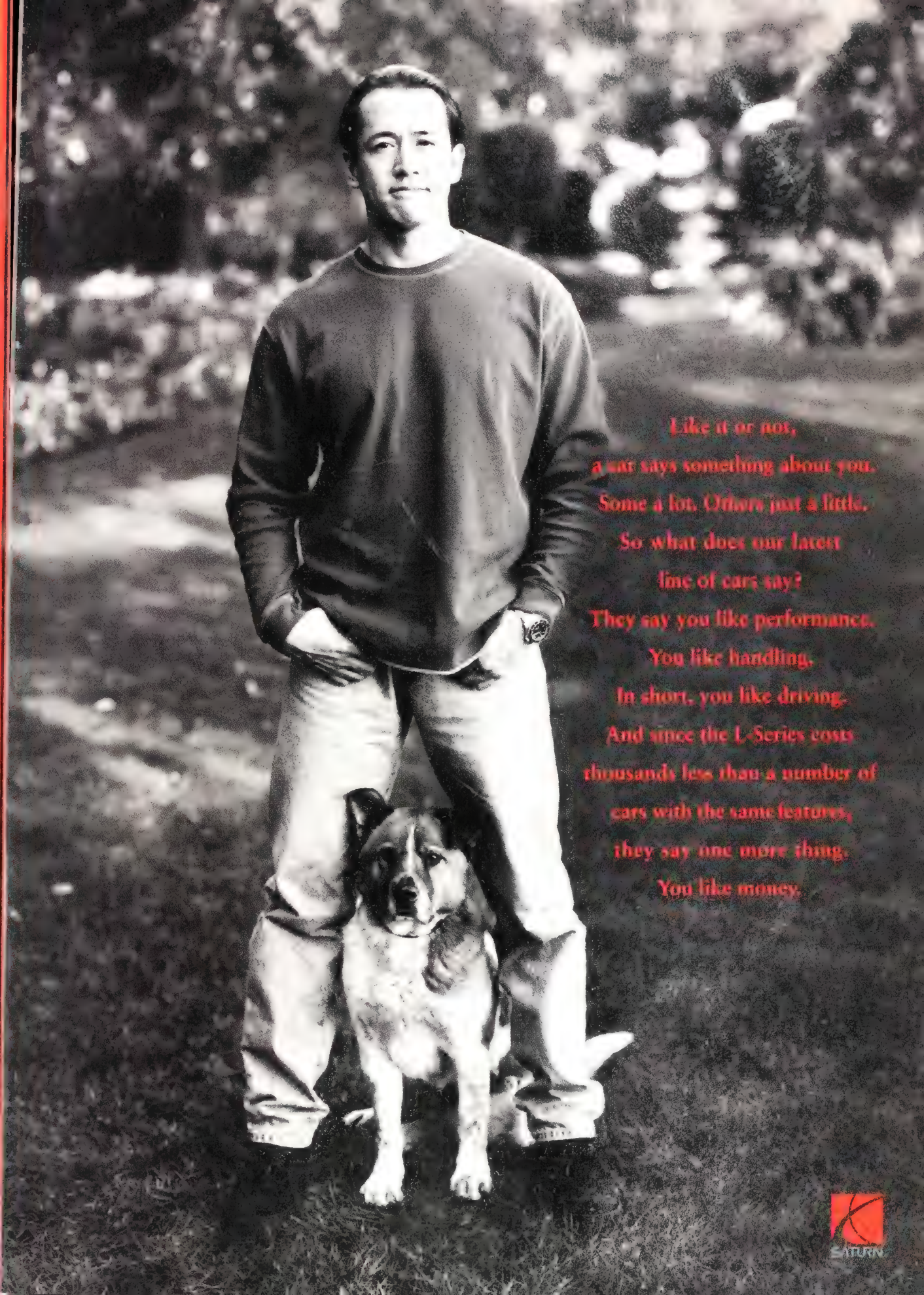


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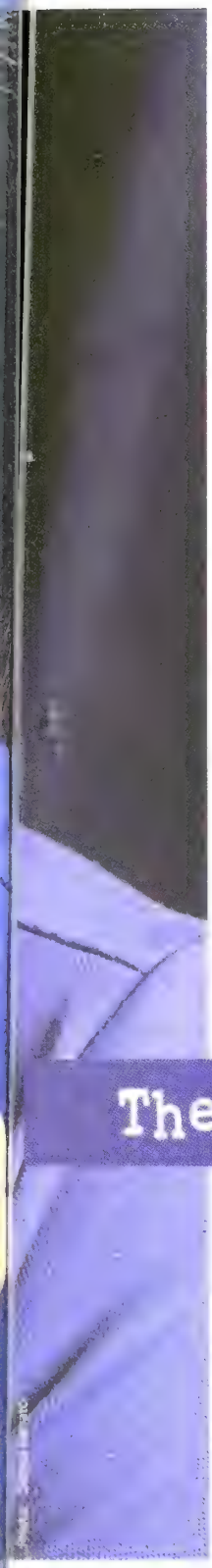


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LETTERS

A Peace of the Shaloms

Because rhetoric about the Palestinian question is usually fraught with invective from all sides, I was startled, and encouraged, to read Alex and Stephen R. Shalom's lucid and incisive sketch of the state of affairs to date ["The Palestinian Question," Readings, January]. Perhaps most startlingly, this clear perspective appeared in an American news publication, the last place one might hope to find it. Thank you to the Shaloms and to *Harper's*. Progress toward a just and lasting peace is impossible without an honest acknowledgment of these disturbing facts.

Maria Birkett
Larnaka, Cyprus

Alex and Stephen R. Shalom's tendentious essay on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was all too predictable. Like most commentary on the conflict, pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli alike, the Shaloms focus with admirable specificity on the strongest part of their argument—in this case, Israel's undeniable mistreatment of the Palestinians. But their eloquent denunciations turn suddenly and mysteriously vague when it comes to providing context for why a nation of Holocaust survivors, indigenous Jewish communities, and Arab Jews who were themselves expelled from their homelands might want to possess such violent scraps of territory as the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

For example, the Shaloms say that "in 1967, Israel conquered Jordan's share of Palestine," which is their only reference to what was in fact a war by the major Arab states (not just Jordan) to annihilate Israel, one of many such attempts beginning in 1948. (The Shaloms refer with maximum obliqueness to the Arabs' rejection of partition and the 1948 pan-Arab war against Israel with the phrase—note the passive voice—"a civil war and then a regional war ensued.") Israel's decision to keep the West Bank and Gaza after 1967 as a bargaining chip and defensive barrier may have been a mistake, but it is more understandable given the context the Shaloms fail to supply.

Among the many truths the Shaloms elide in the article is that Israel was indeed created by the United Nations—the authors can only bring themselves to make a reference to a recommendation. Thus, Israel is unlike most other nations of the world, which were created by conquest. Israel's subsequent militarization and its own conquest of the West Bank and Gaza never would have occurred if the surrounding Arab states had simply left Israel alone and ceased to use the Palestinians cynically as a wedge to destroy it and as a distraction from their own authoritarian failings. Indeed, an article that, like the Shaloms' piece, pretends to speak authoritatively on the conflict and yet fails to mention any Arab state

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ther than for fun. I simply have a soft tabinet crunch.

There's plenty of time to see found on all sides of that debate one conflict. Are there no pastimes t out there which can appeal to th something even approaching even handedness?

Richard Antinucci
Gilmette, Ill.

Coral Beefs

How in God's green Earth can Julia Whitty begin the last paragraph of her article on coral reef destruction ["Ahead of the Tide," January] by saying "As reefs decline, there is some comfort in the one ecological history of our planet ..."? Was this intended as a "Hollywood happy ending" to her lurid ad report?

There is no comfort. Coral reefs are vanishing. The ecological balance, which Whitty details in her article, appears to be happening too rapidly for reefs to adapt or to survive. It is now reasonable to suggest that the current pattern of global warming will have all but eliminated the construction of all coral reefs by the end of the century.

Randy Olson
Department of Biology
University of Southern California
Los Angeles

Julia Whitty wrote with concern about the beauty of tropical coral reefs and the horrible threat that they face. But I would have liked her to include more. Let's not perpetuate the notion that only tropical coral reefs are threatened. There are closer-to-home but similar and more pervasive threats.

According to recent Environmental Protection Agency reports, a large proportion of the reefs in the temperate coastal waters of the United States, from Long Island Sound to the Florida Keys and the Gulf of Mexico, and from Puget Sound to San Diego, are severely damaged or have been eliminated by industrial and urban practices. Around the United States and Canada, the deep coral reefs and the "forests" of macroalgae are being cleared away by highly mecha





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mized trawlers and draggers, while searching ever deeper for fish to satisfy excessive demand. Regrettably, it seems that the greatest underlying threat to our North American marine heritage is ignorance, for we continue to allow the destruction of corals to occur on our own doorstep while decrying from afar that in the tropics.

Martin Willison
Coordinator of the International Forum on Deep Sea Corals
Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Tempestuous Island

Elizabeth Nickson's astonishing fable of Salt Spring Island ["Where the Bee Sucks," January]—in which truth and accuracy are indiscriminately sacrificed to the arch needs of her Shakespearean conceit, and sprightly language disguises slashing hurtful characterizations of individuals and whole communities—cannot go unchallenged. But who will decipher the truth from the lies, the exaggerations, the misinformation, the confusion, when her declamations veer from fact to fantasy within single sentences? The quote she attributes to me, for example, was never spoken by me, nor did she ever interview me, and words like "young pagan men . . . leaving a child behind in each camp" are simply not in my lexicon.

Nickson's cutesy little diatribe is informed by a subtext that is anything but benign. She is at war with the "other" within her community. She savagely belittles anyone with the effrontery to seek alternatives to her hard-eyed business-driven *Weltanschauung*. To her they are pagans and witches, irrespective of whether they are in reality simple-living counterculture people or fully employed, dedicated environmentalists fighting a losing battle to save this tiny scrap of an utterly unique ecosystem.

Witches, incantations, spiritual energy, good intentions, protests, blockades, and courageous women willing to pose nude if it will sell calendars and bring money into www.savesaltspring.com—none of it

showing the least little effect. We in Salt Spring are now being subjected to industrial-scale logging. The pain this causes seems to have escaped Ms. Nickson entirely.

Sam Leighman
Salt Spring Island, B.C.

Elizabeth Nickson's letter from Salt Spring leaves the impression that, after much ado about nothing, all is now well in paradise. We wish.

Salt Spring is under siege. The Texada Land Corporation has purchased and is in the process of clear-cutting and selling for development the last undeveloped part of the island—an area that has been identified by four levels of government as needing protection. Every conceivable method of halting the desecration, from political lobbying to civil disobedience, has been tried and tried again with zero result. Fund-raising is ongoing, but the numbers quoted at the end of Nickson's article are fictitious. Eight hundred thousand dollars has been raised by local volunteers, including $50,000 from calendar sales. This amount has been instrumental in leveraging an additional $7 million from various agencies. Negotiations to purchase the land, however, have been largely unsuccessful to date because the landowners want far more than the appraised value, a price that government and conservation agencies will not pay.

Our community is entirely helpless and vulnerable in the face of legally sanctioned corporate greed, which is why we, a cross section of concerned island residents (not, to my knowledge, witches, nymphs, or crones), chose to draw attention to the situation by posing nude in the Salt Spring Island Women Preserve & Protect calendar, used to illustrate the article. At stake is the quantity and quality of our water supply, future job opportunities, the health of the local economy, and the survival of the rich and diverse ecosystems that are unique to this part of the world. The story of Salt Spring today is not a happy tale of dreams and magic but a microcosm of the battle for survival that is being fought and lost by communities around the globe. *The Tempest* is too gentle a model for this piece.

Elizabeth White
Salt Spring Island, B.C.

I am insulted that Nickson places Salt Spring in the Northwest. To say this implies some sort of American frame of reference. The Yukon is in the Northwest. Salt Spring is in the Southwest. In Canada.

Christian Heemouw
Vancouver, B.C.



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perhaps because I was writing for *Harper's Magazine*, and perhaps because I was new on the island and therefore insignificant, they talked and talked, and when I left their houses I'd drive unsteadily away, my eyes like saucers and mouth agape. Allegory, poor tool that it is, seemed the only way to transmit the astonishment I sometimes felt at what I was told.

Earth-based spirituality is mainstream in the West (north and south) and exists in every configuration from crude love spells to actual coven circles to respected and scholarly feminist inquiry. It informs the prevailing battle, for like nearly everywhere in the Pacific North, Salt Spring is riven and polarized by resource extraction, which puts food on many tables, and the imperative to preserve what's left of pristine nature.

I reported what I was told by the Conservancy, including Elizabeth White, to whom I read the final paragraphs of the story, at the time *Harper's* went to press. That particular government deal fell through, which I reported, immediately, in my column in the *National Post*; another is in the works. My Caliban, Ariel, and at least one Prospero are working together to preserve a 200-acre parcel of heritage forest. Sam Lightman, presumably since he wrote his letter to *Harper's*, presented with the transcript of his interview, has admitted, in our very lively local papers, that he did in fact meet me.

I am aware that some islanders do not like the tone of "Where the Bee Sucks," but for every angry letter I read, two or three strangers call to welcome me to the island and apologize for their intemperate fellows. Neighbors walk down my driveway to say that they laughed themselves silly, that I told the truth, that I said what everyone says, in private, to everyone else, and that Salt Spring is fractious and sometimes unkind, and that I am now one of them, because I have been blooded.

And so, again, Mr. Lapham was right. I have a host of new friends, and I wager that this fuss represents

...hat life is in the new small town, ...illennium version.

Fine Tuning

Nicholas Delbanco's article "The Countess of Stanlein Restored," [January] gives a fascinating glimpse into the world of luthiers and its cynosure, René Morel. The tonal qualities of the great Italian instruments are a continual subject of wonder and speculation. I find it troubling, therefore, to find a cryptic reference to "a luthier up in Michigan" who made the copy of a 1727 Strad owned by Ko Iwasaki. In the scene depicted, Iwasaki and Yo-Yo Ma are with Bernard Greenhouse, admiring the Countess, comparing cellos, and discussing their distinctive merits. Iwasaki's Strad copy is one of six made by Timothy Jansma, a splendid luthier who should not remain nameless. I, too, own one of his beautifully crafted instruments, which I now play exclusively.

Gordon Epperson
Professor Emeritus of Cello
The University of Arizona
Tucson, Ariz.

In "The Countess of Stanlein Restored," Nicholas Delbanco eloquently explores the reverence of those who come into contact with a fine musical instrument. He is inspired to describe it through personification: The cellist embraces and cradles his instrument "like a father with a newborn child or a husband with a long-lost bride." The restorer lavishes a lifetime of skill, sensitivity, and respect on "so fine a lady." How jarring, then, is the joke that "'a lecture should be like a woman's skirt . . . long enough to cover the subject, short enough to keep *it* interesting'" [italics added]! Apparently Delbanco (along with the audience that laughs at his joke) does not perceive that referring to a person as an object is as degrading as the opposite is exalting.

Evan Johnson
Violinist
Edgewater, N.J.

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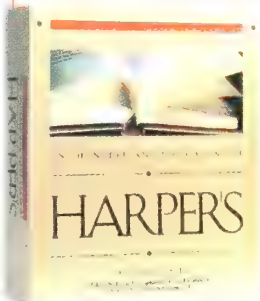
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NOTEBOOK

Mirror, mirror on the wall

By Lewis H. Lapham

We've all had some bad times and some good times. But if you believe in yourself and wish hard enough, your dreams will come true . . . in the wishing well.

Denise Rich

To watch President Clinton and his wife cash out of the White House last winter was to watch two winning contestants collect their jackpot future on a network game show—the happy couple beaming in the limelight, thrilled with the $13 million in prize money presented by their book publishers, excited about their holiday travel destinations (a Senate seat for her, a New York office in the sky for him), pleased with the home furnishings, the new golf clubs, the silverthatware and cashmere throws. A wonderful American moment for Mom and Dad and Chelsea and the dog, but where was the customary round of spontaneous applause, and why no joyful clash of cymbals?

The studio audience failed to respond to the cue cards, and somebody forgot to alert the band. Even as the Clintons were exiting the stage, the news media took up the cudgels of rebuke, scolding the happy couple for their bad manners and deplorable taste, for the belated confession to the crime of perjury and the pardons distributed like Mardi Gras confetti to a crowd of cheering felons. Nor were the media content to let the matter drop. For nearly three weeks the columnists and editorial writers reported and recounted the cost of the items received from Denise Rich ($7,375 for tables and chairs, upwards of $450,000 for a presidential library), from Steven Spielberg (chinaware, $4,920), from Ken Burns (photograph of Duke Ellington, $800). When they weren't running the numbers the pastors in the newspaper pulpits recalled the sinful encounter with Monica Lewinsky, rummaged through their dictionaries for words strong enough to convey an image of unremitting selfishness and unsated greed—both Clintons likened to cormorants and stoats, natural-born catch basins, hollow as abandoned mines, eager to devour all the golf balls, every toasted almond, the last shred of gossip.

The more rabid tirades tended to appear in the media associated with the Republican Party and attitudes supposedly conservative—in *The Weekly Standard*, the *New York Post*, *National Review*, etc.—which seemed to me both spiteful and wrong-headed. The publications in question never tire of preaching the gospel of free-range capitalism; the American consumer society defined as the wonder of the world, the country founded on the fortune-bearing dreams of wealth and fame. Why then vilify the Clintons for following the instructions on the label? Who else more exuberantly personifies the buoyant spirit of the Miller beer commercials?

The media criticism proceeded from a premise known to Aristotle, and while the Clintons were carrying off the White House chairs, I came across a particularly lucid reformulation of it in David Selbourne's *The Principle of Duty*. First published in England in 1997, the book was reissued in January by the University of Notre Dame Press, and in the preface to the American edition the author sums up, in five pages, the whole of the indictment stuffed into a year's subscription to the *Wall Street Journal*. Define the pursuit of happiness so broadly as to embrace every wish in every wishing well, believe in "nuthin' else" except the wolfish self let loose in the free markets of duty-free desire, and the result is tyranny. Not the tyranny of the English crown that plagued the eighteenth-century American colonies with "swarms of Officers" sent hither "to harass our people, and eat out their substance," but the tyranny imposed "without let or hindrance" by the assertions of an infinite number of impatient demands variously defined as freedoms, rights, privileges, and self-realizations. When writing the Declaration of Independence Thomas Jefferson also had in mind a "just and solid republican government" held together by citizens who recognized their obligation to the common good and so agreed—in the interest of their own safety as well as that of the republic—to leave some of the wishes at the bottom of the well. The assumption doesn't make much sense to a society composed of citizens in name only, "ostensible citizens" united by little else except the possession of a credit card and a password to the Internet.

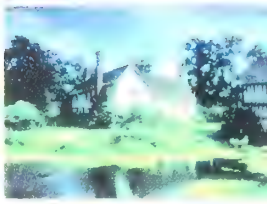
Selbourne doesn't pretend to the capture of a new idea, and in support of his observations he cites the dictum of Spinoza ("Citizens are not born, but made") as well as the authority of Cicero, Mazzini, Edmund Burke, and Tom Paine. The strength of the book rests in the clarity of its perception that no commonwealth or decent form of democratic government (no matter how heavily armed with cruise missiles and well equipped with tax exemptions) can defend itself against the raids of free-

spooting moral entrepreneurs and self-proclaimed kings. Burke put the proposition as follows: "Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without." The statement speaks to the success of the American markets in cosmetics and prescription drugs as well as to the population of the nation's prisons.

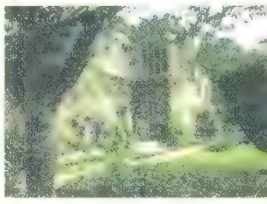
During earlier periods of American history the governing and possessing classes understood that their commercial voyages required some sort of civic ballast in the hold. But the social orders founded first on the Protestant Church and then on the quasi-religious faith in democracy have given way to a managerial elite loyal to nothing other than its own ambition, and instead of a *res publica* for which the citizens feel affection, we have a government casino open to every minority interest and political subtext capable of hiring a suite of high-priced lobbyists.

To watch the Clintons feed is not a pretty sight, but rather than confront the spectacle of a disaggregated society unwilling to acknowledge a principle of duty, we talk about the loss of "leadership" or the failure of the nation's schools. No matter who happens to be making the speech—politician, cab driver, university poet—all agree that only leadership can rescue the country from its stomach. Leadership and teaching the kids how to read.

The conversation never gets around to the truism that leaders can't exist without followers, that they depend upon a coherent governing class respectful of an ethical ideal that encompasses the particular duties of both the citizen and the state. The maintenance of such an ideal brings with it the burdens of moderation and restraint, which, if carried beyond the giving up of cigarettes and the third whiskey before dinner, seriously interfere with everybody's rights and self-realizations. The after-dinner speakers avoid the point. They prefer to speak of leadership as if it were a function of personality or an innate talent, like that for playing the piano or solving crossword puzzles,

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and when casting around for exemplary heroes they mention the present military commanders, and football coaches—specialists hired for special occasions. Nobody likes to dwell on the moral effort required of the audience as well as the stars of the show, and after the customary denunciations of Hollywood and the news media, the conversation drifts off into the mists of nostalgia. Long ago and [illegible] America was [illegible] handsome and virtuous people who knew how to make sacrifices, ride horses, construct com[illegible] and [illegible]

The vague memory of film documentaries once seen on PBS or the History Channel provided George W. Bush with the whole of his platform in last year's election campaign. His admirers presented him as the candidate from 1955, an honorary member of Tom Brokaw's "Greatest Generation," outfitted at birth with the civic virtues that carried his father through to victory in the Second World War. Here at last was a man of breeding, not known for his intellectual [illegible] [illegible] acquaintance with the affairs of state but somebody who could be relied upon not to steal the spoons. The speechwriters made free use of the words "civility" and "honor," and what they had in mind was a trip down memory lane with Private Ryan and General Reagan. Vote Republican, and return with George W. Bush to the America of yesteryear.

Within the provinces coded red on November's electoral map, so poignant was the sentiment in favor of a social order rooted in the ground of moral principle that the candidate could as easily have been made of wood—a wagon wheel that once had rolled west [illegible] Trail, Ty Cobb's baseball bat, a post from the Yale fence. It didn't matter what the totem said or didn't say; the mere fact of its presence on the White House lawn was certain to please the ancestors and reawaken the Great Spirit of Abraham Lincoln. The promotion moved the merchandise, and the new President's Cabinet appointments argued for the restora[illegible] [illegible]

• The attorney general, John Ashcroft, secure in the attitudes current on the Missouri frontier in 1851—firm in the belief that Negroes couldn't be trusted with the vote and seeing nothing morally amiss with the Confederate defense of slavery, wary of any freedoms too recklessly granted to women, approving the occasional but judicious resort to gunplay, informing an audience at Bob Jones University in 1999 that in America "we have no King but Jesus."

• Gale A. Norton, secretary of the interior, inclined to look upon the public lands in a way that would have been familiar to John C. Frémont and Colonel George A. Custer—a hostile wilderness meant to be improved by cattle ranchers and timber merchants, by mining companies, itinerant evangelists, and the United States Cavalry.

• Donald Rumsfeld, secretary of defense, still engaged in the Cold War with the ghosts of the Soviet empire, brooding over maps of the artillery positions on the Kamchatka Peninsula, drawing up blueprints for an invincible missile shield sure to protect San Diego and St. Louis from nuclear annihilation.

Thus supported by the certainties of the near and distant past, the Bush Administration during its first weeks in office moved to reverse the flow of time. No more money for misguided charities apt to mention the word "abortion" to strange women in foreign lands; a new White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives through which the government would disburse funds to its [illegible] citizens in return for their enlistment in the army of God; a restructuring of the tax laws that rewarded the industry of the deserving rich and punished the indolence of the unworthy poor.

The nineteenth-century moral prescriptions presumed the existence of a citizenry willing to take the medicine, but in the year 2001, where does President Bush find a constituency loyal to a civic order grounded on a premise that doesn't translate into the question "What's in it for me?" When George Marshall retired as secretary of state in 1949, every important New York publisher offered him large sums of money to write his memoirs. Marshall declined the invitations to wealth and the lecture circuit. No, he said in effect, I did nothing other than my duty as a citizen; the correspondence and the state papers belong to the United States, and when I walk out of this office, I'm taking nothing with me except my hat.

Who among the company of our contemporary "leaders" would not leave the hat and take the files? Let them for a moment lose focus on the great and noble art of self-promotion, and somebody might steal from them a crumb of profit or a scrap of patronage.

During the second of last year's presidential debates Vice President Al Gore testified to the sincerity of Governor Bush's emotions—"I believe his statement that he has a good heart"—and I see no reason to doubt the certification. Nor do I see why it matters. We're talking about a President appointed by five Supreme Court justices who evinced as little respect for the law as Bill and Hillary Clinton. Bush's election campaign raised $193 million, the largest sum invested in prospective government favors in the history of the country. The President's principal advisers represent the private rather than the public interest, men trained and cosseted by the corporations, accustomed to plundering the landscape and the U.S. Treasury on behalf of the oil and defense industries. I don't think we can expect them to begin taking to heart the maxims of Marcus Aurelius.

The Republicans in Washington over the last thirty years have proved themselves as swinish in their habits as the Democrats, eating out the people's substance at the troughs of entitlement and graft, bidding up the price of their memoirs to the same publishers in the market for news of Monica Lewinsky's underwear. No fewer than 138 of President Ronald Reagan's government appointees found themselves either investigated for official misconduct or charged with violations of the criminal code.

The savings and loan swindle of the middle 1980s that cost the American taxpayers $500 billion was best understood as a debt robbery rather than a failed economic policy. President Reagan's trading of arms for hostages in Iran established the precedent for Marc Rich's business practice in the same country, and the pardon granted by President Bush I to Caspar Weinberger, the secretary of defense, for his assistance in the deal was as much a travesty of justice as the pardon granted by President Clinton to the husband of his favorite songwriter. Nor were the Republicans shy about receiving gifts. Nancy Reagan departed the White House with shoes and dresses worth $1 million, the elder Bush with a collection of custom-made fishing rods a good deal more expensive than Clinton's golf clubs.

Why then so much frothing at the mouth when Bill and Hillary went off into the golden sunset with the coffee tables and the lamps? Possibly because so many critics, among them the most vociferous, don't enjoy looking at themselves in a mirror. In the faces of President and Mrs. Clinton they see, all too clearly, the fraudulence of their own claims to high-minded truth and noble virtue.

Because the United States no longer possesses a governing class licensed with the authority to issue the warrants of moral character and spiritual worth, we have instead a careerist elite, makeshift and provisional, manufactured at the expensive universities and programmed to flatter the whims of money, attend meetings, juggle budgets and policy decisions, write editorials for Rupert Murdoch's *Weekly Standard*. It is a timid and anxious crowd, gathering merit badges as avidly as Bill and Hillary and as glad to swallow the humiliations served with the caviar, the foundation grant, the tenured appointment, the smoked salmon, the promotion to the national news desk, and the weekend in the Hamptons. People groomed as culture bearers (very tasteful, very well behaved) don't like to think of themselves as mountebanks dancing for coins on a network game show, don't wish to see and hear the workings of their own digestive tracts. ■

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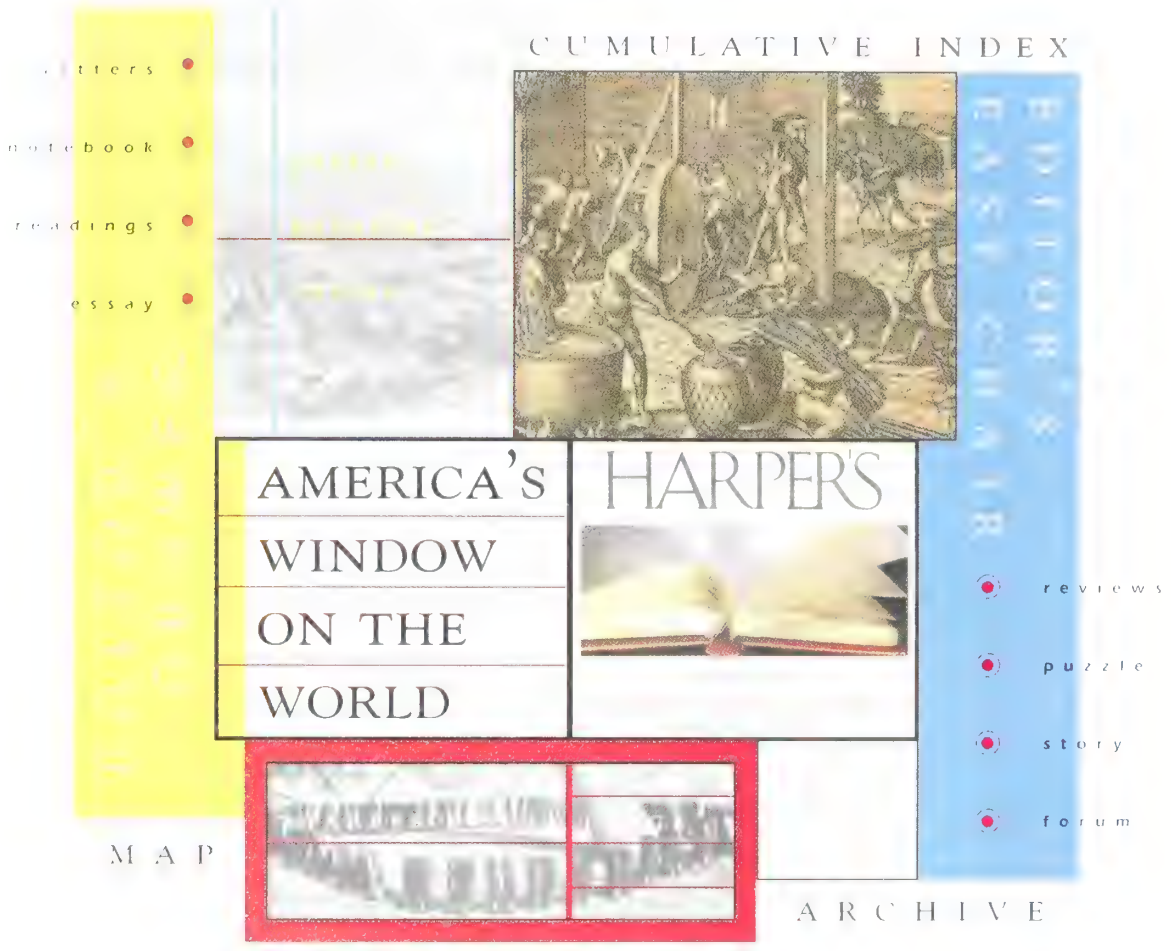
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HARPER'S INDEX

Chances that the taxes of a low-income working American family will not be reduced by the Bush tax plan : 3 in 5

Percentage of federal returns audited last year that were filed by poor Americans seeking Earned Income Tax Credits : 44

Percentage change between 1999 and 2000 in the number of audits of U.S. corporations : –28

Federal income taxes paid by PepsiCo in 1999 : 0

Amount by which federal taxes paid in states carried by Al Gore in 2000 exceeded federal spending in them, per capita : $685

Amount by which federal taxes paid in states carried by George W. Bush fell short of federal spending in them, per capita : $645

Hours after taking office in 1993 that Bill Clinton ordered a five-year delay on lobbying by ex–White House officials : 1

Days before leaving office that Clinton revoked the order : 23

Number of years ago that new energy secretary Spencer Abraham cosponsored a bill to abolish the Department of Energy : 2

Gallons by which daily U.S. oil consumption would drop if SUVs' average fuel efficiency increased by 3 mpg : 49,000,000

Gallons per day that the proposed drilling of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is projected to yield : 42,000,000

Percentage of U.S. nuclear power plants operating in 1996 that have since broken federal safety regulations : 92

Number of accidents involving U.S. nuclear arms between 1950 and 1980, according to the Pentagon : 32

Minimum number of such accidents, according to a U.S. General Accounting Office report : 233 (see page 33)

Years before a British official was killed in Athens last winter that a CIA bureau chief was killed there with the same gun : 25

Average number of people killed in Laos each year since 1973 by U.S. bombs left over from the Vietnam War : 28

Number of soldiers discharged from the U.S. military for obesity during the 1990s : 41,799

Minimum number of stuffed lions that Pakistan's recently ousted prime minister took with him into exile last year : 2

Declared value of the jewelry stolen from rapper Prodigy last December after he left a music-video shoot in Queens : $343,000

Pounds of paper used to produce 400 hard copies of New York City's report on the Fresh Kills landfill's closing : 14,800

Square miles of Quebec City to be enclosed with chain-link fencing during a free-trade meeting there this month : 2

Number of people protesting genetically engineered crops who occupied a Monsanto farm in Brazil on January 26 : 1,300

Tons of food suitable for human consumption wasted in the United States each year : 48,000,000

Tons of antibiotics and antimicrobials given to healthy U.S. farm animals each year : 12,500

Chance that an American's *Streptococcus pneumoniae* infection is resistant to penicillin : 1 in 4

Percentage of San Francisco Opera employees who claim to have been sickened by theatrical fog or smoke : 39

Rank of Oasis singer Liam Gallagher among public figures most reviled by Britons : 3

Rank of Slobodan Milosevic and Adolf Hitler, respectively : 2,1

Estimated percentage of immigrants to Israel from former Soviet states since 1998 who were not Jewish by birth : 60

Percentage change since 1980 in church contributions made per member to 29 major Protestant denominations : +40

Percentage change since then in the average amount per member these churches allocated to charitable work : +10

Price paid on eBay last December for an eight-week internship at *Marie Claire* : $3,575

Chance that a TV character engaging in sexual intercourse during the 1997–98 season was a teenager : 1 in 33

Chance last season : 1 in 11

Percentage of U.S. high school sex-ed teachers who say that abstinence is the only birth-control method they cover : 23

Percentage of U.S. men who say they have neglected their sex lives because of consumer electronics : 8

Number of tries it took a blind North Dakota man to pass a shooting test last fall before receiving a gun permit : 2

Number of fire stations in Columbia, Tennessee, cited for fire-code violations in January : 5

Blocks separating Kenneth Starr's New York University Law School office from Monica Lewinsky's apartment : 7

Blocks separating Lewinsky's apartment from Bill Clinton's Harlem office : 135

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available. [illegible] Index [illegible] page 75

Harper's Index [illegible]

Number of people who have been to space: 390

THE HARPER'S INDEX BOOK

— VOLUME 3 —

Average number of dimples on a golf ball: 415
Chance that an American would rather be mugged than audited: 1 in 2
Gallons of chewing gum scraped up each year by the Statue of Liberty's maintenance crew: 39

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- Brian Williams, MSNBC

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- *Good Morning America*

The Harper's Index Book is funny (Miles of doodles produced by the average sixth grader during the school year: 1.3) . . . illuminating (Ratio of the number of Frank Sinatra's gold records to those of Kiss: 1:1) . . . sobering (Chance that a child born in New York City in 1998 is living in poverty: 1 in 2) . . . stunning (Rank of Aries among the astrological signs of people most likely to be in an automobile accident: 1) . . . and, often, simply curious (Ratio of April showers to plants that produced May flowers at the Springfield, Illinois, Park District in 1998: 1:1,571).

Edited by Lewis H. Lapham and senior editor Charis Conn, with an introduction by George Plimpton, this edition of *The Harper's Index Book* is historic, too: it's published in the sesquicentennial of *Harper's Magazine*, the oldest continuously published American magazine.

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READINGS

[Essay]

HUMAN NATURE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

From an essay by Robin Fox in the Winter issue of The National Interest. *Fox teaches anthropology at Rutgers University; his books include* Kinship and Marriage *and, most recently,* The Passionate Mind: Sources of Destruction and Creativity.

So much has now been written about "human rights" that we tend to lose our perspective and get confused. As with the classic issue of "natural rights" before it, the debate becomes so infused with passion that straight thinking is almost impossible. Yet argument about rights of one sort or another is both possible and desirable, particularly given the current penchant for using "human rights" as a basis for often quite brutal foreign-policy decisions. But we have to recognize that putting "human" in front of "rights"—when, for example, talking of the "human right" of people to free elections—is simply to use a warm hurrah word as a rhetorical device. In the same way, wars of political suppression become "humanitarian interventions," and anything we do not currently happen to like becomes "unnatural," even if it is something as basically human as the hunting of game animals or investment in multiple spouses.

Both "human" and "natural" do have a real content, and we can identify that content. The trouble is that we have used them as hurrah words for so long that we balk at any result that is not consonant with our current enlightened prejudices. We want to define what is natural; we do not want nature to do it for us, for the result might not be pretty.

Thus, if anyone were to make an argument, however logical, coherent, and backed by evidence, that there was no natural or human right to vote, for example, he would not be answered so much as ridiculed and condemned as reactionary and anti-humanitarian. Yet a respectable argument could indeed be made that there is nothing in nature, or certainly in the nature of being human, that demands the right to vote as such. That right is not so much a natural or human right as one contingent on the fairly advanced economic and political development of certain civilizations. It may be possible to argue that at such a level everyone has a right to vote (though exceptions will rapidly be listed—children, lunatics, felons, peers, exiles, non-residents, resident noncitizens, non-property-owners, unregistered persons), but such a right is scarcely natural or human. It is more properly cultural, or social and political, deriving from the nature of government so achieved.

On the other hand, a very good argument could be made, using basic Darwinian selection theory, that there is a natural and human right to revenge. If someone kills my nephew or grandson, he robs me of a portion of my inclusive fitness, that is, the strength of my personal gene pool. To redress this imbalance, it could be ar

gued, I have the right to inflict a similar loss on him. I should be allowed to deprive him of someone related to him. This could be satisfied by killing two of his first cousins, or any such combination that would level the balance sheet. It is remarkable that many systems of vengeance in human society seem implicitly to observe the logic of inclusive fitness. They do not, for example, necessarily prescribe that I kill the person responsible; one of his kin or clan will do just as well.

This system of vengeance is less efficient as a redress than a system whereby I would get to impregnate one of the perpetrator's females, thus forcing him to raise to viability a person carrying my own genes. Actually, in the example cited this would amount to overcompensation, since I would gain by half to a loss of one quarter. It would be more precise if my brother were allowed to make the impregnation, thus restoring the exact balance. Either method is of course impractical, given intertribal or clan hostility, but note how ubiquitous is the practice of impregnating captive women or the women of defeated rivals. The advancing Russian forces in World War II made a massive effort to redress the imbalance caused by German depredations during Operation Barbarossa. Russian genes are now being nurtured by the Federal Republic's economic and welfare systems on a vast scale.

I probably do not have the right to demand that any superordinate entity carry out this vengeance for me (though I may call on supernatural agencies, and will commonly use sorcery to harm an offender). In strict fitness theory I am bound to redress my own wrongs and either succeed or fail, thus determining my own ultimate fitness in terms of the genes that I, and those who have genes in common with me through descent, contribute to the pool. Perhaps the most basic claim we have against a collective entity is that it leave us alone to settle our affairs. It is generally observed, however, that as human societies evolve, many of the self-help functions are delegated to some superordinate authority.

This is the essence of the social contract: for the sake of harmony within the group, certain basic rights to individual action are delegated to the group itself. Hence, compensation comes to substitute for vengeance. Again, this is often framed in reproductive terms: compensation for a murdered man is that which will enable his kin to raise another child to replace him. In many systems before the advent of the monopolistic state, there was no question of personal retribution through the execution of the murderer. Just compensation enabling the genetic replacement of the victim was considered sufficient. This can be seen as a humanitarian advance in human morals, or as a retrograde step depriving individuals of the right of vengeance, but either way there is no question that it preserved the idea of redressing the genetic imbalance caused by a human-activated death. The monopolistic state, however, declares that there is no individual right to vengeance, and reserves that right to itself. Thus the state exacts retributive justice but leaves the kin of the victim without compensation and the imbalance permanent.

It is not clear how this is an improvement on the older systems of self-help or compensation

[Offer]

EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

From a November 16, 2000, letter to a prospective employee from Delores Hamilton, acting director of Human Resources for the District of Columbia public schools. The letter appeared in the Loose Lips column of the Washington City Paper *in January.*

Dear Ms. —:

On June 23, 2000, you were informed by letter that you would not receive an offer of employment with the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) based on the results of your criminal background check. Based on your subsequent presentation of documentation that your 1984 charge for Uniform Controlled Substance Act, cannabis, was no papered; that your 1984 charge for shoplifting was nolle prosequi; that your 1984 charge for assault with a dangerous weapon, razor, was no papered; that your 1984 charge for destruction of government property was nolle prosequi; that your 1986 charge for assault with a deadly weapon was dismissed; that your 1987 charge for soliciting for prostitution was nolle prosequi; that your 1989 charge for assault with a dangerous weapon, razor, was no papered; and that your 1992 Uniform Controlled Substance Act, possession with intent to distribute cocaine, was dismissed; you are eligible for employment with DCPS.

If you have any questions or concerns, kindly contact Labor Management and Employee Relations.

Delores Hamilton



Kinder Transport, *a painting by Glenn Brown* [illegible] *part of the Turner Prize 2000 Exhibition at the Tate Britain Gallery, London*

("blood money"). It does, however, raise an interesting question: At a certain point of development in human social complexity, does the collectivity acquire "human rights" over the individual? This is important, because so much of the writing on human rights assumes them to be by definition individual rights. This reasoning often goes to the length of seeing no rights as inhering in any collectivity—except, perhaps, the family—and even as seeing the collectivity as the automatic enemy of human rights. Such rights are almost by definition rights against the state. But there have always been human collectivities; we are, as F. H. Bradley observed, following Darwin, following Aristotle, a rootedly social animal. In fact, Bradley argued, we could show that individuals do not exist, that the social is real and the individual the abstraction. Take away from any so-called individual everything contributed to his nature and person by society (starting with the genetic contribution of his parents, grandparents, and so forth) and what is left? Nothing.

What sense, to take a different example, does it make to attribute individual rights to ants? Woody Allen's neurotic worker, oppressed by the collective morality of the colony in the movie *Antz*, is funny only because it is impossible: an anthropomorphizing of the ant condition. But it is interesting because [illegible] precisely what has happened in the ramose situation. A mammal living in socially complex colonies, like baboons or chimpanzees [illegible] (in evolutionary terms) became conscious of its own condition, probably by evolving powers of

[Memo]

ITEMIZED ABDUCTIONS

From a memorandum written last July by Internal Revenue Service attorney George Baker

TO: Richard Poprick, Customer Service Division
FROM: George Baker, Assistant to the Branch Chief
SUBJECT: Support for Kidnapped Child WTA-S-125042-00

Your memorandum raises the following issues:

(1) Can the parents of a minor child who was kidnapped by a person not related to the child take a dependency exemption for the child in the year of the kidnapping if the child is missing at the end of the year?

(2) Can the parents continue to take the exemption in later years if the parents maintain a room for the child and incur expenses to search for the child?

Under section 152(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, the term "dependent" generally includes a child of a taxpayer if the taxpayer provided over half of the child's support for the calendar year in which the taxable year of the taxpayer begins.

Section 1.152-1(a)(2)(i) of the Income Tax Regulation defines the term "support" by example. It states that support "includes food, shelter, clothing, medical and dental care, education, and the like."

In the absence of any legal authority directly on point, we conclude that the parents should be presumed to meet the support test established by section 152(a) if, before the kidnapping, the parents provided half of the support for the child. Proof of total support for the period prior to the kidnapping and proof that the parents provided over half that support should suffice.

For taxable years after the year of the kidnapping, although the issue is not free from doubt, we do not think that the parents meet the support test of section 152(a). Even if the parents continue to maintain a room for the child and continue to expend funds searching for the child, we do not think that these expenses constitute support.

If you have any questions please contact me.

speech with which to talk about it. Baboons cannot have individual rights any more than ants. They simply do what they have to do to be baboons and produce more baboons. But once a primate is conscious of its condition, then it can start to ask the Woody Allen type of question: "Why must I always do the things the group wants to do? Why can't I decide for myself what is good for me?" In this way it can formulate the notion first of "individuals" and then of certain things owing to individuals: just as the group has a "right" to a territory, so an individual has a "right" to . . . The answer is pretty much anything it can think up. Once started on this delusional pathway, there is ultimately no limit except that of the imagination.

The individual "rights" that a primitive, self-conscious, but of necessity group-living primate would claim would of course be based on its individual needs to feed and procreate successfully. All individuals feed, struggle for dominance, mate, and raise young. In this process, the existence of the group is a necessity like the existence of natural resources. Individuals will make altruistic sacrifices for the group, since it is essentially a group of kin and thus represents the repository of their inclusive fitness. There is no way in which the small group of relatives could be seen as somehow having different interests from those of the individuals composing it. In Bradleyan terms, there could be no distinction between the society and the individual.

As levels of social complexity increased after the Neolithic revolution, some 10,000 years ago, organisms would increasingly have been dealing with (relative) genetic strangers who made demands on them in the name of social units whose genes were not identical by descent with theirs. It is at this stage that true conflict would have occurred, as organisms started to feel the need to assert their "rights," that is, the things they needed to do in order to ensure their fitness: the means of reproduction.

To take a currently contentious issue: Is there a "human right" to free choice of one's marriage partner? To those of us reared in a relentlessly individualistic society, such a right seems obvious and basic. But it is so only in such a society. In a society in which the clan or extended family is the basic unit, then it is equally obvious that such a choice is too important to be left to individual whim. What is at stake is the continuing reproductive success of a group of genetically close individuals. The parents of any potential couple carefully monitor the match in light of the probability of a successful reproductive outcome. In doing so, they are acting not only to protect their own



Hot Pink Mac [illegible]

inclusive fitness but also, in terms of their greater experience and property, to protect that of the young couple.

There is nothing either unnatural or inhuman here. On the contrary, our struggle to allow whimsical affection and pleasure to decide the choice of partner without concern for subsequent consequences of divorce, step-parent abuse, one-parent family problems, and the like, can be seen as inhuman, unnatural, and reprehensible. For so-called primitive societies have we elevated individual choice that it appears to us simply "selfish" that a planned marriage is unthinkable. It is an infringement of "human rights." It is not an infringement of something, and there may indeed be good moral arguments against it, but the "human rights" argument will not wash. There is nothing in the "laws of nature" that says the kin group (the pool of genes related by descent) should not seek to enhance the reproductive success of its members. On the contrary, it should seek to do so using its individual [illegible] given imagination, intelligence, and free will, and hence the capacity for delusion—as often as not [illegible] of interest.

Thus, non-kin collectivities, while certainly often acting against the interests of their members, will also often move in to prevent at least [illegible] decide, child abuse, infanticide, or abortion. Men [illegible] havior has reduced their chances of raising children to viability. Social welfare systems operate on the same principle. [illegible] no natural right to their assistance, they have a natural right to assist us. Here non-kin collectivities [illegible] rated and [illegible]

It is in the interest of a nation, for example, that it reproduce itself. It tends, in its delusional-ideological system, to pass itself off as a super-kin group. At the primitive level of evolving humanity (99 percent of our existence as a species) there was no need for such pretense. The kin group was, in essence, the social collec-

most basic, and hence most "human," level there would be no "rights" issue. In promoting the success of our kin we are promoting the success of our own genes (or, more correctly, they are using us to promote their success).

Still, within the purview of basic kin selection theory we have another human right: the right to nepotistic assistance. We have the right both to assist close kin and to receive assistance from them in the pursuit of our own reproductive success. Until the advent of meritocratic bureaucracy, the world lived by this principle. It is what "kinship" is all about: all those gentes, clans, sibs, septs, moieties, phratries, lineages, houses, kindreds, and extended families. There is no human society that does not map out, often in alarming detail, its universe of kin, the better to calculate the degree and kind of help and obligation expected. The term "nepotism," from the Latin *nepos* ("grandson," "sister's son"), was first invented to describe the hypocritical (but most certainly "natural") tendency of prelates either to favor their nephews or to hide their illegitimate sons under the nepotic title. In another stunning reversal of natural values, we have now made it one of the worst crimes against "equality," which it most assuredly is. This does not prevent us, though, at all levels of society up to the very top, from wallowing in the hypocrisy. The most basic feature of social evolution is not so easily defined away.

The point of the above examples is to make us wary of a free and easy use of the terms "human" and "natural." It is not to say that there are no rights other than those that exist in some guttural, shambling, scavenging state of protohuman existence. Of course there are. But we should be more careful in the logical underpinning we choose to give to these rights, if for no other reason than that we render the terms meaningless and empty, and rob them even of rhetorical value.

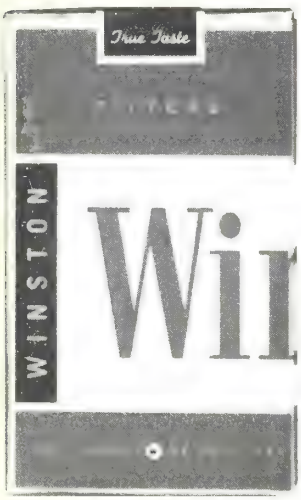
As we have seen, furthermore, human rights may be rights to all kinds of behaviors that our sophisticated and sensitive liberal natures may abhor. A very good case could be made that the "right to procreate" (which has now been established in U.S. common law) includes the right to polygamy (polygyny and polyandry) for those who can afford it and want it. Why should the state—on grounds that are always fuzzy and derive largely from religious prejudice—limit the number of one's spouses? The overwhelming majority of human societies (approximately 85 percent) have allowed or enjoined polygamy. Again, the "advanced" societies have reversed this tendency, which is wholly "natural" in a sexually competitive species of large land mammals with moderate sexual dimorphism and late-maturing young. As with the Romans, the argument for monogamy is egalitarian. But, as we have seen, nature is not egalitarian: if some succeed and some fail in the polygamy stakes, then the same is in fact true of monogamy, where some will always outbreed others. And yet again, the monogamous societies, while banning multiple marriages as "unnatural," hypocritically allow all kinds of multiple mating—serial monogamy being the most common example in modern Western society.

What, then, should we call these rights that are not basic, natural, or human, but which we "know" to be desirable? The cherished rights enshrined in the Constitution, the Declaration of the Rights of Man, the U.N. Charter and human rights declaration, and all the treaties and commissions up to the Helsinki Accords and the establishment of the International Criminal Court—all of these are highly evolved political and social rights that derive from the Western Enlightenment tradition, with its basic values of equality and universalism. Many of them are peculiar to the Christian tradition. Despite attempts to base these rights on "nature," in most cases they—by their very design—either run counter to nature or, at best, concern things about which nature is strictly neutral.

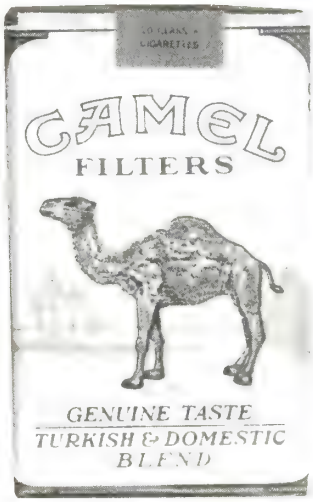
We have looked at some of the former. As examples of the latter we might suggest that "nature" gives us no clues about what form certain institutions might take, only about the rules of engagement, as it were. We should be able to accrue resources so as to take part in the reproductive struggle. But exactly how we should accrue those resources (whether they include that Enlightenment favorite "property," for example), to what lengths we should go to prevent others (our reproductive rivals) from accruing them, and to what extent we should assist our close kin by passing resources to them—on all these matters nature is silent. The winners will be rewarded, but they will be rewarded if they cheat as well as if they play fair. They will be rewarded if they kill and torture, if that is what gets more of their genes into the pool. They will be rewarded if they cooperate, if that is what gets it done. We can see that some behaviors will be self-defeating—too many cheaters will leave too few suckers—and probably self-limiting as a strategy in the long run. But in the short run, a cheater can perfectly well manage a respectable score in the inclusive fitness stakes. We still celebrate the con man and the huckster, and especially deride the cuckold. The law may take one view, but popular opinion is not fooled.

Inclusive fitness theory—preserving and enlarging one's personal gene pool—is only one

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way into the issue of what is basically human. I have taken it here simply as an example. Take another approach—say, the findings of psychology—into the basic list of human motivations. Certainly we shall find some that suit our warm and compassionate version of "human," but there will be others that we would not want on any list of things to be fought for and protected and promoted.

So where are we left with our rights problem? Does it really matter if the term "human" is wrongly applied to rights? It does, because this is an area that is too important for us to indulge in systematic self-delusion. We are moving into a period when the pursuit of "human rights" issues is filling the vacuum in foreign policy left by the disappearance of clear-cut "national interest" issues. This rationale has already been the excuse for us to break the rules of international behavior established in the "national interest" period, to bomb a sovereign nation into submission and kill at least a thousand people. This stance threatens to start another and more deadly war with China. It is moralistic, self-righteous, and aggressive. It is dangerous as well as hypocritical in its selective action. Yugoslavia was in the end massively bombed to preserve "the credibility of NATO." How useful that "human rights" could be invoked as a cynical justification. (See also the human and "national" rights of Kuwaiti sheikhs that were so gallantly protected in what otherwise might have seemed to be an old-fashioned war to protect our vital oil interests.) And given the moral state of our politicians, this is about all we can expect.

Robert Benchley was of the opinion that whenever a government began shouting "spies!" it was inevitably trying to divert attention from its own shady business. Perhaps we can be forgiven for suspecting something of the sort when we hear politicians chanting the mantra of "human rights"—usually to cover some hypocritical, and inevitably blundering, manipulation of the U.N. by the powers in the Security Council. Given the inevitable skepticism about governmental honesty (or at least competence), we should at the very least insist on being clear about what we are doing and on what grounds we are doing it. We should not take action on the grounds that what we are supporting or suppressing is in some sense essentially "human," when it is no such thing. A great deal of what is human is in fact at the root of what we are opposing, suppressing, killing, and destroying in the name of human rights. To achieve the kind of world envisioned in the treaties, charters, and commissions, we must indeed suppress and destroy—or at the very least control—human nature. We are not acting for it, we are acting against it, or we are supplementing it in those cases where it gives us no guidance. As Katharine Hepburn said to Humphrey Bogart in *The African Queen*: "Human nature, Mr. Allnut, is what we are put in this world to rise above."

[Clarification]

BODIES OF WATER

The following correction appeared in the February 3 edition of the New York Times.

Because of an editing error, an article on Tuesday about the court case in Chile against Gen. Augusto Pinochet misidentified the ocean into which the military apparently dumped the father of Viviana Díaz, a woman who leads a group of surviving family members. It was the Pacific, not the Atlantic.

[Plot]

CONSPIRACY THEORY

From a September 27, 1970, cable sent by CIA officials in Langley, Virginia, to covert operatives in Santiago, Chile. Twelve days earlier, Richard Nixon had ordered the CIA to foment a military takeover in Chile to block the November inauguration of Salvador Allende, a democratically elected Socialist. Augusto Pinochet, who led the 1973 coup in which Allende died, remained dictator of Chile until 1990; under his rule approximately 130,000 Chilean citizens were arrested and 3,100 were murdered or disappeared. Currently under house arrest in Chile, Pinochet is awaiting trial on charges of kidnapping and murder. The complete CIA document, one of 16,000 records on Chile that were declassified last year by the Clinton Administration, will be published by the New Press this fall in The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier of Atrocity and Accountability, *edited by National Security Archive senior analyst Peter Kornbluh.*

PHILOSOPHY

We accept as axiom that Frei [Chile's outgoing president] must either manage the coup actively or go, if it is to succeed. We accept as hypothesis that Frei probably will not move. We

postulate that Frei's ability to move and to a lesser extent his willingness are related to the creation of a climate in which such a move can take place successfully. We conclude that it is our task to create a climate climaxing with a solid pretext that will force the military and the president to take some action in the desired direction.

[redacted]

A number of actions have been placed in train to sensitize the external world to the threat Allende poses. This is a necessary first step toward moving to more vital pressure points such as the acceptance of the failure of the political solution and the need for the military one. This effort is in its first stages. We believe that the external effort, which is by nature complementary, is useless unless we can spark internal resistance.

[redacted]

A. Economic Warfare: [*Redacted by CIA*] The ambassador can be of powerful assistance in this effort.

B. Political Warfare: It is essential that it appear that Allende has minimum political support. In every fashion every special interest group that we can contact should be financed and assisted in making public statements, public rallies, traveling to propagandize, or in any other imaginative way the station can conjure to assure that Allende does not enlarge his base of support. Exhaust every possible means for doing this and engage in any operation that you think will accomplish this purpose no matter how large or small.

C. Psychological Warfare: Here we must pause for a moment to take stock. As little as ten days ago there seemed to be almost no feeling outside of Chile and very little mass feeling within Chile that the election of Allende was necessarily an evil. Thus, it may be difficult to instantly move into a hard line about a military coup. We must begin to gradually create a climate in which this conclusion becomes inevitable. Thus we foresee a four-stage campaign.

(1) Sensitize feeling within and without Chile that election of Allende is a nefarious development for Chile, Latin America, and the world. We are well along on this objective outside Chile but are still in doubt as to the psychological temperature on this point within Chile. We are talking about mass public feeling as opposed to the private feelings of the elite.

(2) Create the conviction that Allende must be stopped.

(3) Discredit parliamentary solutions as unworkable.

(4) Surface ineluctable conclusion that military coup is the only answer. This to be carried forward until it takes place. However, we must hold firmly to the outline of our production will be [redacted] determined and effective, not leaving the indelible impression in the mind that an accumulation of arsenic does. The key is psych war within Chile. We cannot embark on [redacted] the world if Chile itself is a placid lake. The fuel for the fire must come within Chile. Therefore, the station should employ every stratagem, every ploy, however bizarre, to create this internal resistance. Public and provocative rallies should be held, growing in size and intensity until the Communists must react.

[redacted]

Eventually we may use [*Redacted*] propaganda to persuade the military that it is their constitutional duty to prevent Allende from seizing power.

[redacted]

If we are successful in heightening tension through the main lines noted above, the pretext—the one act that will force massive Communist reaction and/or public outrage—will, in all probability, present itself. We can be looking for the opportunity and when the time comes spark it.

[Black Box]

WHATEVER WE DID IS NO GOOD

From the transcript of the cockpit voice recorder of Alaska Airlines Flight 261, which crashed into the Pacific Ocean [redacted] January 31, 2000. The transcript was released by the National Transportation Safety Board in December. Investigators believe the crash was caused by the failure of the "jackscrew" assembly in the MD-80's tail, which controls whether the plane's nose is pointed up or down. The plane was overdue for maintenance, and records show that two different kinds of grease, which were possibly incompatible, were applied to the jackscrew, though the recovered part had no grease at all on it. Investigators also believe the jackscrew design itself is flawed, because it allows a single failure to cause a crash. The FAA was unable to produce any details about the process through which the design was approved.

LOS ANGELES AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL (LAX-CTR): Alaska two six one squawk two zero one zero.

FIRST OFFICER WILLIAM LANSKY: Two zero one [redacted]



Which [illegible] was on display last summer at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

[illegible]: Twenty-one dispatch. Uh, it, uh, you want to find it? We'll come to a safety to, uh, we will do that. Uh, we, we'll, uh, tell you though that if we land in L.A., uh, we'll be looking at probably an hour and a half on the ground. We have a major flow program going right now.

[illegible]: Well, boy, you put me in a spot here—I really didn't want to hear about the flow being the reason you're calling us. I'm concerned about overflying suitable airports.

MASKAY AIRLINES DISPATCH: Well, we wanna do what's safe, so if that's what you feel is, uh, all, we just wanna make sure you have all of the, uh, all the info.

•

LANSKY: We might just ask if there's a ground-school instructor there available and, and discuss it with him—or a, uh, simulator instructor.

THOMPSON: Yeah.

THOMPSON: And, uh, dispatch one sixty-one—we're wondering if we can get some support out of the, uh, instructional force—instructors up there—if they got any ideas for us.

•

[illegible]: Uhh, somebody was calling in about wheelchairs.

[illegible]: Oh really?

THOMPSON: —when I'm working on a problem.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT: Is that why it went static?

THOMPSON: Okay yeah, now—I just, that's

something that oughta be in the computers. If they want it that bad they, you guys oughta be able to pick up the phone.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT: Mmm hmmm.

THOMPSON: ... just drives me nuts. Not that I want to go on about it—you know it just blows me away, they think we're gonna land, they're gonna fix it. Now they're worried about the flow. I'm sorry, this airplane isn't gonna go anywhere for a while—so, you know.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT: So they're trying to put the pressure on you.

THOMPSON: Well, no, yeah.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT: We'll get it to where it needs to be.

THOMPSON: And actually it doesn't matter that much to us.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT: Still not gonna go out on time to the next—

THOMPSON: Yeah, yeah. I thought they'd cover the people better from L.A. than San Francisco.

♦

ALASKA AIRLINES (LAX-OPS1): Alaska two sixty-one from operations, can you give us your tail number?

THOMPSON: Uh, two six sixty-one, it was ship number nine six three.

MAINTENANCE: Yeah, are you guys with the, uh, horizontal situation?

THOMPSON: Affirmative.

MAINTENANCE: Yeah, did you try the suitcase handles and the pickle switches, right?

THOMPSON: Yeah, we tried everything together—we've run just about everything. If you've got any hidden circuit breakers we'd love to know about 'em.

MAINTENANCE: I'll look at the, uh, circuit-breaker, uh, guide just as a double check and, um, yeah, I just wanted to know if you tried the pickle switches and the suitcase handles to see if it was moving in with any of the, uh, other switches other than the, uh, suitcase handles alone or nothing.

THOMPSON: We tried just about every iteration.

MAINTENANCE: And alternates inop too, huh?

THOMPSON: Yup, it's just, it appears to be jammed—the, uh, the whole thing. It spikes out when we use the primary. We get AC load that tells me the motor's trim to run, but the break won't move it. When we use the alternate, nothing happens.

MAINTENANCE: Okay and you, you, you say you get a spike on the meter up there in the cockpit when you, uh, try to move it with the, uh, um, with the primary, right?

♦

THOMPSON: I'm gonna click it off. You got it.

TANSKY: Okay.

♦

THOMPSON: Affirmative, we get a spike when we do the primary trim, but there is no perceptible, uh, change on the uh, elevator, uh, when we do the alternate.

MAINTENANCE: Okay, thank you, see you here.

THOMPSON: Let's do that.

[*Sound of click.*]

THOMPSON: This'll click it off.

[*Sound of click.*]

[*Sound of two faint thumps in. Sound similar to horizontal stabilizer trim motor.*]

[*Sound similar to horizontal stabilizer trim motor, then audible tone.*]

THOMPSON: Holy—

[*Sound similar to horizontal stabilizer trim motor, then audible tone.*]

THOMPSON: You got it—me—

[*Sound.*] What are you doing?

THOMPSON: I—it clicked off.

[*Sound of chime.*]

MECHANICAL VOICE: Altitude.

THOMPSON: ... it got worse—okay.

[*Sound similar to airframe vibration begins.*]

THOMPSON: You're stalled.

[*Sound similar to airframe vibration becomes louder.*]

THOMPSON: No, no, you gotta release it, you gotta release it.

[*Sound of click. Sound similar to airframe vibration, ends.*]

THOMPSON: Let's speedbrake.

THOMPSON: Gimme a high-pressure pump.

TANSKY: Okay.

THOMPSON: Help me back, help me back.

TANSKY: Okay.

THOMPSON: Center, Alaska two sixty-one, we are, uh, in a dive here, and I've lost control, vertical pitch.

LAX-CTRL: Alaska two sixty-one, say again, sir.

THOMPSON: Yeah, we're out of twenty-six thousand feet, we are in a vertical dive—not a dive yet—but, uh, we've lost vertical control of our airplane.

[*Sound of click.*]

THOMPSON: Just help me.

THOMPSON: Once we get the speed below, maybe—we'll be okay.

♦

THOMPSON: We're at twenty-three seven, request, uh.

THOMPSON: Yeah, we can't get back under control here.

TANSKY: No, we don't. Okay.

♦

THOMPSON: Okay.

[*Sound of click.*]

TANSKY: Let's take the speedbrakes off—I'm—

THOMPSON: No, no, leave them there. It seems to be helping.

THOMPSON: ... ms.

[*Sound of click.*]

[illegible] Altitude
[illegible] Okay—it really wants to pitch down.
[illegible] Okay.
[illegible] It's messy with that
[illegible] Agree with you.

♦

LAX-CTR1: Alaska two sixty-one, say your condition.

THOMPSON: We are at twenty-four thousand feet. Kinda stabilized. We're slowing here, and, uh, we're going, uh, to do a little troubleshooting. Can you gimme a block between, uh, twenty and twenty-five?

♦

TANSKY: You have the airplane, let me just try it.
[illegible] Okay.
TANSKY: Uh, how hard is it?
THOMPSON: I don't know—my adrenaline's going—it was really tough there for a while.
TANSKY: Yeah it is.
[illegible] Okay.
TANSKY: Whatever we did is no good. Don't do that again.
THOMPSON: Yeah, no, it went down, it went to full nose down.
TANSKY: Uh, it's a lot worse than it was?
THOMPSON: Yeah, yeah, we're in much worse shape now.
THOMPSON: I think it's at the stop, full stop—and I'm thinking, we can—can it go any worse?—but it probably can—but when we slowed down, let's slow it, let's get down to two hundred knots and see what happens.
[illegible] Okay.
[*Sound of click*]
TANSKY: We have to put the slats out and everything—flaps and slats.
THOMPSON: Yeah—well, we'll wait, okay. You [illegible] second?
TANSKY: Yeah.

♦

THOMPSON: Maintenance two sixty-one, are [illegible]
MAINTENANCE2: Yeah, two sixty-one, this is [illegible]
THOMPSON: Okay, we did, we did both the pickle switch and the suitcase handles, and it [illegible] full nose trim down.
MAINTENANCE2: Oh, it ran away trim down.
THOMPSON: And now we're in a pinch so we're holding, uh, we're worse than we were.
[illegible] Okay, uh [illegible]
MAINTENANCE1: [*In background*] You want me to talk to them?
[illegible] Yeah [illegible] maintenance, uh, uh, you getting full nose trim down, but are you getting any, you don't get [illegible] that correct?
THOMPSON: That's affirm. We went full nose down, and I'm afraid to try it again to see if we can get it to go in the other direction.
MAINTENANCE1: Okay, well, your discretion, uh, if you want to try it, that's okay with me. If not, that's fine. Um, we'll see you at the gate.

♦

TANSKY: Did it happen—in reverse? When you pulled back it went forward?
THOMPSON: I went tab down—right, and it should have come back. Instead it went the other way.
[illegible] Uh huh.
THOMPSON: What do you think?
TANSKY: Uhhh.
THOMPSON: You wanna try it or not?
TANSKY: Uhh no. Boy, I don't know.
THOMPSON: It's up to you, man.
TANSKY: Let's head back toward, uh, here, let's see [illegible] well, we're—
THOMPSON: I like where we're going out over the water myself—I don't like going this fast though.
[*Sound of click*]
THOMPSON: Okay, you got [*interruption*] second?
TANSKY: Yeah.
TANSKY: We better—talk to the people in the back there.
THOMPSON: Yeah, I know.
THOMPSON: Folks, we have had a flight-control problem up front here. We're working on it. Uh, that's Los Angeles off to the right there, that's where we're intending to go. We're pretty busy up here working this situation. I don't anticipate any big problems once we get a couple of subsystems on the line. But we will be going to LAX, and I'd anticipate us parking there in about twenty to thirty minutes.
THOMPSON: Okay—did the, first of all, speedbrakes. Did they have any effect?
THOMPSON: Let's put the power where it'll be for one point two, for landing. You buy that?
THOMPSON: Slow it down and see what happens.
THOMPSON: I got the yoke.

♦

LAX-CTR1: Alaska two sixty-one, contact L.A. center. They are aware of your situation.
TANSKY: L.A., Alaska two sixty-one, we're with you. We're at twenty-two five. We have a jammed stabilizer, and we're maintaining altitude with difficulty. Uh, but, uh, we can maintain altitude we think—and our intention is to land at Los Angeles.
THOMPSON: Let me get, let me have it.
TANSKY: Let's do it at this altitude instead—
THOMPSON: What?
TANSKY: —of going to ten. Let's do it at this altitude.
THOMPSON: 'Cause the airflow that much difference down at ten, this air's thin enough that—you know what I'm saying?

TANSKY: Yeah, uh, I'll tell them, uh
THOMPSON: I just made a PA to everyone to get everybody down. You might call the flight attendants
[*Sound similar to a cockpit door operating*]
FLIGHT ATTENDANT: I was just coming up this way.
TANSKY: Uhh.
THOMPSON: I need everything picked up, and everybody strapped down—
FLIGHT ATTENDANT: Okay.
THOMPSON: —'cause I'm going to unload the airplane and see if we can regain control of it that way.
FLIGHT ATTENDANT: Okay, we had a big bang back there.
THOMPSON: Yeah, I heard it. I think the stab trim thing is broke. I need you—everybody strapped in now, dear, 'cause I'm going to release the back pressure and see if I can get it—back.
TANSKY: I don't think you need any more speedbrakes, do you?
THOMPSON: Uh, no, actually
TANSKY: He wants us to maintain seventeen.
THOMPSON: Okay, I need help with this here. Slats, let's
TANSKY: Okay slats
THOMPSON: Gimme slats extend.
TANSKY: Got it
THOMPSON: I'm test-flying now
TANSKY: How does it feel?
THOMPSON: It's wanting to pitch over more on you.
TANSKY: Really?
THOMPSON: Yeah.
TANSKY: Try flaps? Fifteen? Eleven?
THOMPSON: Ahh, let's go to eleven.
TANSKY: Okay, get some power on.
THOMPSON: I'm at two hundred and fifty knots, so I'm lookin'—
TANSKY: Real hard?
THOMPSON: No, actually, it's pretty stable right here—see, but we got to get down to a hundred and eighty. Okay, bring the flaps and slats back up for me.
TANSKY: Slats too?
THOMPSON: Yeah. What I'm, what I wanna do is get the nose up, and then let the nose fall through and see if we can stab it when it's unloaded.
[*Sound of chime for approximately 34 seconds*]
MECHANICAL VOICE: Altitude.
TANSKY: You mean use this again? I don't think we should—if it can fly, it like—
THOMPSON: It's on the stop now, it's on the stop.
TANSKY: Well, not according to that it's not. The trim might be, and then it might be, uh, if something's popped back there –

[Anecdote]

BROKEN ARROW

From an interview with Wayne Coucy for Nuclear 911, *a Visual Concept Entertainment documentary directed by Peter Kuran, which was released in March. In March 1958, a B-47 Stratojet accidentally dropped a bomb on Coucy's house near Florence, South Carolina. The high-explosive portion of the bomb detonated upon impact, creating a 35-foot-deep, 75-foot-wide crater behind his house. The U.S. government has officially acknowledged thirty-two accidents involving nuclear weapons, though unofficial estimates range from ninety-six to several hundred.*

The house is over in here, where the little pine trees and these other tall trees are. I kept all the bushes cut out. It was a real pretty place.

That afternoon—cloudy, kind of cool, windy—my son and I were in the back yard with my two daughters, my niece, and the maid in the little playhouse that the girls had built. About 4:15 that afternoon, an airplane came over the house, and just as he passed over our little shelter we were in, we heard an explosion.

When the explosion happened, I came out of my garage, and all I could see was a little curl of smoke coming out of the hole, so I never did go over to look until the next day.

It just came like a bolt of lightning. Boom! And it was all over.

The concussion from that bomb blew all the plaster on the inside of my house loose. The 2 x 4 studding in the wall, a lot of those were broken. It caved the roof in. Messed the floors up, walls up. I had a freezer; it moved it over a few feet on the floor. Hallway was full of dirt and mud. Automobile windows were blown out. It was completely stripped. You couldn't hardly have run into it with a bulldozer and done it very much worse.

I was in the hospital when a fella called me from Atlanta, he said, "An atomic bomb fell up there. It came from a SAC [Strategic Air Command] plane flying probably six, eight miles high, and, accidentally, the bomb dropped."

No frogs or tadpoles or little fish ever developed in that hole, and that's a right good sign there that something happened.

They offered me $500 to fill the hole up, but I'da had to dig another hole just as big to get the dirt to fill that hole up. So I wouldn't think about it. I said I'd rather have a hole there than another hole someplace else.

[illegible]: Yeah.
[illegible]: It might be mechanical damage too. I think it it's controllable, we ought a just try to land it.
THOMPSON: You think so? Okay, let's head for L.A.
[*Sound of faint thump*]
FANSKY: You feel that?
[illegible]: Yeah. Okay gimme sl— See, this is a bitch.
FANSKY: Is it?
THOMPSON: Yeah.
[*Sound of extremely loud noise. Sound similar to loose articles moving around in cockpit*]
[illegible]: Mayday.
THOMPSON: Push and roll, push and roll.
THOMPSON: Okay. We are inverted—and now we gotta get it.
[*Sound of chime*]
[illegible]: Kick.
THOMPSON: Push push push—push the blue side up.
THOMPSON: Push.
FANSKY: I'm pushing.
THOMPSON: Okay, now let's kick rudder—left rudder, left rudder.
FANSKY: I can't reach it.
THOMPSON: Okay, right rudder, right rudder.
[illegible]: Are we flyin'? We're flyin'—we're flyin—tell 'em what we're doing.
FANSKY: Oh yeah, let me get—
THOMPSON: Gotta get it over again—at least upside down we're flyin'.
[*Sounds similar to compressor stalls begin and continue to end of recording*]
[*Sound similar to engine spool down*]
[illegible]: Speedbrakes.
[illegible]: Got it.
THOMPSON: Ah, here we go.
[*End of recording*]

[Prospectus]

WELCOME TO THE FOAM AGE

The following registration application was filed last year with the Securities and Exchange Commission by Bighard.com, Inc., in anticipation of the company's initial public offering. The application is still pending.

Bighard.com, Inc. (the "Company") was formed to provide specialized manufactured goods to governments; large, medium, and small businesses; and retail and wholesale establishments. The primary business of the Company will be to provide a cost-effective and expedient means of fabricating various building and industrial products through the use of patented foam-wall technology. It may revolutionize the building of new cities and the rebuilding of old ones on Earth. It may help to colonize the moon, Mars, and beyond. Space is the Final Economic Frontier. Read on!

Bighard.com, Inc. has created a patented process whereby an adhesive holds together the inner walls of an inflatable form in any shape until foam forces them apart, thereby preventing the foam from developing irregular bubble formation and surge cavities, and allowing for the construction of a structurally sound wall. It's amazing! Strong foams using silica and new polymers impervious to the elements are already available, and others are being developed today.

Like inventing the wheel, or discovering concrete or steel for the first time, Bighard.com's patented technology is not just an invention; it's an industry. Properly exploited, the problems this invention solves are so varied that this may go down in history as the beginning of The Foam Age.

Bighard.com's technology can be used to build residential houses in a day—after a shell is unpacked and inflated with foam that hardens. It can be used to quickly erect residential backyard storage sheds: just place the inflatable form on the ground and press the foam injector button, and in a few minutes the shed is installed. Also, cubes of the correct density can be used to replace stone and cement for large building construction. The product can also be used for roadway dividers and even roadway; spans or beams; emergency structures for shelter; backyard pools where a pit is lined with an inflatable cup shape; playground toy houses; decorative structures and/or free-form containers for advertising-product logos; mining; submersible structures of a very, very large size; boat components, docks, and bridges.

But there is one product that Bighard.com will manufacture that stands alone in its ambition: an inflatable space-station module, a moon or Mars colony habitat, of virtually any size and shape, with walls that deploy automatically. The foam constituents can have additives to resist radiation and impact from space debris. Upon deployment the internal structure is a clean room free of fumes and carcinogenic material. Bighard.com expects to be able to offer space stations of 5,000-foot diameter in the future; this size will be viable for biospheres, self-contained, self-refreshing

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Clearly, the Greeks are a source of much that we esteem in our own culture: democracy, philosophy, drama, history-writing, our ideals of beauty and athletic competition, and more. Blazoned above the portal of Apollo's temple at Delphi were the words "Know thyself." For us, this injunction to self-awareness also commands knowledge of the Greeks.

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These 24 fascinating lectures on Ancient Greek Civilization by Professor Jeremy McInerney of the University of Pennsylvania are one of the newest additions to The Great Courses from The Teaching Company. These recorded lectures cover the eleven centuries from the end of the Neolithic period to the conquests of Alexander the Great. Professor McInerney traces the complex links between our civilization and its Hellenic origins. Dr. McInerney is an outstanding young scholar, working at the leading edge of his field. You can be confident that the insights you get from him are based on the newest and best in academic research and criticism. You'll leave behind clichés and come away vastly enriched by new knowledge, not only of history, but of literature, art, philosophy, religion, and more.

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Lecture 5: The Age of Heroes
Lecture 6: From Sicily to Syria—The Growth of Trade and Colonization
Lecture 7: Delphi and Olympia
Lecture 8: The Spartans
Lecture 9: Revolution
Lecture 10: Tyranny
Lecture 11: The Origins of Democracy
Lecture 12: Beyond Greece—The Persian Empire

Part II

Lecture 13: The Persian Wars
Lecture 14: The Athenian Empire
Lecture 15: The Art of Democracy
Lecture 16: Sacrifice and Greek Religion
Lecture 17: Theater and the Competition of Art
Lecture 18: Sex and Gender
Lecture 19: The Peloponnesian War, Part I
Lecture 20: The Peloponnesian War, Part II
Lecture 21: Socrates on Trial
Lecture 22: Slavery and Freedom
Lecture 23: Athens in Decline?
Lecture 24: Philip, Alexander, and Greece in Transition

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About Your Professor:

JEREMY McINERNEY (Ph.D., University of California-Berkeley, 1992) is Associate Professor of Classical Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where from 1994 to 1998 he held the Laura Jan Meyerson Term Chair in the Humanities. He also currently serves as chair of the university's Graduate Group in the Art and Archaeology of the Mediterranean World. He has firsthand archaeological experience at sites in Corinth, Crete, and Israel, and serves on the Managing Committee of the American School of Classical Studies in Athens, Greece.

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ecologic[illegible]s livable for long periods of time without restocking vital necessities. Inflatable foam wall construction allows for large structures to be compacted during launch. The advantages are that a structure of virtually unlimited size can be placed in orbit. Colonies of the moon and Mars are suddenly doable.

The future is now. The future of foam constituents is bright. Bighard.com expects that it will play a substantial role in space research, laboratories, human habitats, internal docking of spacecraft for repairs, and colonization of the moon and Mars.

A full 20 percent of the time and activity of Bighard.com will focus on orbital containers owing to the potential for a high rate of financial return. But more important is the possibility for Bighard.com to obtain great prestige from fabricating such space-station-oriented devices that the Company will become a household name and gain international recognition.

The duration of this offering will be a period of two years. The offering will be for 100,000 common nonvoting shares par value $20 each.

[Invention]

BUILDING A BETTER SANDWICH

From the official record of United States patent 6,004,596, which is held by Menusaver, Inc., a company based in Orrville, Ohio. In December, Menusaver alleged that Albie's Foods, Inc., a Michigan company, was infringing on its patent by serving crustless peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches, and demanded that it cease and desist immediately.

[illegible]

We claim

1. A sealed crustless sandwich, comprising:

a first bread layer having a first perimeter surface coplanar to a contact surface;

at least one filling of an edible food juxtaposed to said contact surface;

a second bread layer juxtaposed to said at least one filling opposite of said first bread layer, wherein said second bread layer includes a second perimeter surface similar to said first perimeter surface;

a crimped edge directly between said first perimeter surface and said second perimeter surface for sealing said at least one filling between said first bread layer and said second bread layer;

wherein a crust portion of said first bread layer and said second bread layer has been removed.

2. The sealed crustless sandwich of claim 1, wherein said at least one filling comprises:

a first filling;

a second filling;

a third filling; and

wherein said second filling is completely surrounded by said first filling and said third filling for preventing said second filling from engaging said first bread layer and said second bread layer.

3. The sealed crustless sandwich of claim 2, wherein said first filling and third filling have sealing characteristics.

4. The sealed crustless sandwich of claim 3, wherein:

said first filling is juxtaposed to said first bread layer;

said third filling is juxtaposed to said second bread layer; and

an outer edge of said first filling and said third filling are engaged to one another to form a reservoir for retaining said second filling in between.

5. The sealed crustless sandwich of claim 4, wherein said first filling and said third filling are comprised of peanut butter; and said second filling is comprised of a jelly.

[illegible] OF THE INVENTION

Many individuals enjoy sandwiches with meat- or jellylike fillings between two conventional slices of bread. However, some individuals do not enjoy the outer crust associated with the conventional slices of bread and therefore take the time to tear away the outer crust from the desired soft inner portions of the bread. This outer crust portion is then thrown away and wasted. There is currently no method or device for baking bread without having an outer crust. Hence, there is a need for a convenient sandwich that does not have an outer crust and that is not prone to waste of the edible outer crust portions. The present invention provides a method of making a sealed crustless sandwich that can be stored for extended periods of time without an inner filling seeping into the bread portion.



Nancy Drew by Pamela Ribon, illustrated by Jenny Mulligan, from the Nancy Drew Graphic Novels series

[Rhymes]

PUPPY DOGGS

From lyrics posted on The Playground, an online rap competition hosted by the official Lil Bow Wow website (www.lilbowwow.com). Lil Bow Wow is a thirteen-year-old rapper whose debut album, Beware of Dog, *sold over a million copies last year.*

Name: Akilah Harrison
Ohio is where i am from
and it ain't gonna stop entill i'm done,
and i rock the playground
like no other can
when you hear me rap i want every one to stand.
look in my eyes, y'all know i ain't playing
thats why all through the city
all i hear little boys saying is
a-k-i-l-a-h
where my cats at, meeow wit me now

Name: India Moss
Comin in like a rottweiler
i'm too vicious
smack in my face
chewing bubblicious
Rollin around town
ridin on dubs
and i still use bubble bath
in the bath tub
Rubbadubdub
bouncin in the club
10 year old chick
show me some love

Name: Lil Woof Woof
I RAP PROFANITY FREE
AND MY GRADES ARE ALWAYS THE KEY.
SO I GET GOOD GRADES.
AND I DON'T HAVE A MAID.
I CAN CLEAN MY OWN ROOM
AND GET READY TO MEET YOUR DOOM.

Name: Ice
I be dressin in black,
ackin how I ack,

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Their wings may span six feet. Bringing bald eagles grace and majesty, but also danger. And that's because the place an eagle decides to land might be a high-voltage power line. So people working in Wyoming built special platforms on top of power poles. Helping this threatened species land safely. And soar to new heights.

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[illegible]
if he talkin bout your girl
hit 'em wit a bottle,
hit him wit a chair,
[illegible] nigga,
[illegible] nigga
mess around, get jumped, and get stump
[illegible]
nigga, what, what, nigga, what, what, what,
nigga, what, what, nigga, what, what (repeat 4)

Name: Lil Steelcraft Lil D
Being a kid you can't say what you want to say
play what you want to play
even stay out night to day
Because you got responsibilities
make sure your room clean, take out the trash
and do your work that you got from class.
It seems so hard being a child,
making sure your dirty clothes is not a pile,
wanting your food not hot but mild.
I'm a kid so I know there are hills,
but we got to relize we don't have to pay bills,
don't have to work in a field.
Get sick and mommy gives you a pill.
I'm Lil D, 13-teen,
don't use shaving cream
but got lucky like that jack and the bean.

[Consideration]

EMPTY CAGES

From an essay by Robert Vivian that appeared in Salt Hill *last fall. Vivian is the author of* Cold Snap as Yearning, *a collection of his essays to be published this summer by the University of Nebraska Press.*

I pay secret attention to abandoned shopping carts, those derelicts of renegade shopping sprees taken from their native stores, upended humpty-dumpty-style over the backs of fences, into bushes, near dumpsters and rotting mattresses, some of them stuffed full of moldy bread, broken belts, car batteries, diapers. They will never go that way again, where thoughtful hands inspect ripe fruit, feeling for bruises; where the impulse buy becomes a heart-thumping necessity, the pause and ponder of small yearnings. They will never again fit neatly into rows of their collapsible brethren, cages we come to when we're hungry or lonely. All of that is over. Instead, outside, they become the barren repositories of some half-forecast doom, a modern kind of waste so subtle they are like the brief, empty cages of our own hearts, left in lots to tell us about ourselves. Who knew they would end up at the bottom of a gulch, tied to a hubcap in the rain? What midnight need or disrepair brought them to the edge of oblivion and then pushed them over into the spontaneous junkyard blooming like steely vines in alleys and ditches? Why here, now, strewn about broken-down neighborhoods where towels are used for curtains and windows have the vacant, half-shuttered look of swollen, black eyes? I've seen them on my walks for years, more and more of them roaming away from stores, as if the homelessness of shopping carts has become a national epidemic, a secret hurt. And what if I decided to make one of these carts my own, to push it all the way home into my living room, my bedroom, the spare room I call an office? I can hear the rumble of the poor wheels not made for concrete sidewalks or long hauls, and the looks of passersby who might think, There goes another one who didn't quite make it. I could put so much into one of these carts, all of my shoes and records, a healthy dose of apples, and move out across the country, one or two miles per hour, the steady drone of stony wheels becoming a fine white noise around me.

I see them all over, bums and homeless people, pushing these carts past urban ruins, wandering down the streets with their balls of hairy twine and all manner of cans, bottles, and tarps. They make these carts their moving caravan, and if I see their lips moving silently, maybe it's because they are talking to someone none of us can see; maybe they are holding counsel with people who can't touch them anymore. This, too, is a kind of temptation. The gleaming cage could hold everything I would ever need, and it would still be too much. Then the carts become something else, the moving wonder of damaged lives, the unpretentious and quiet declaration that here what you see is what you get. These are not prettified ventures but the one movement or faith in everything they will ever have, and this is something to learn from and to consider. No garages, no computers, no hair gel or workout videos, no miracle of new clothes or coffeemakers that measure each ground. No comforters, curling irons, prints of Monet, cucumber slicers, tax records from two years ago, ironing boards, fat dictionaries. Just caged necessity under the sky and the threat of letting it roll away from you once and for all. ■



Tense Present

Democracy, English, and the Wars over Usage

BY DAVID FOSTER WALLACE

Between you and I

Not too good of a

A Dictionary of Modern American Usage, by Bryan A. Garner. Oxford University Press, 1998. 723 pages. $35.

A Dictionary of Modern English Usage, by H. W. Fowler. Oxford University Press, 1926. Rev. by Sir Ernest Gowers, 1965. 725 pages.

The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language, by Steven Pinker. William Morrow and Company, 1994. 494 pages.

Webster's Dictionary of English Usage, E. W. Gilman, ed. Merriam-Webster Inc., 1989. 978 pages.

Usage and Abusage: A Guide to Good English, by Eric Partridge. Hamish Hamilton, 1957. 392 pages.

Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Philip Gove, ed. G. & C. Merriam Company, 1961. 2,662 pages.

Diligo et quod vis fac.
—ST. AUGUSTINE

Did you know that probing the seamy underbelly of U.S. lexicography reveals ideological strife and controversy and intrigue and nastiness and fervor on a nearly hanging-chad scale? For instance, did you know that some modern dictionaries are notoriously liberal and others notoriously conservative, and that certain conservative dictionaries were actually conceived and designed as corrective responses to the "corruption" and "permissiveness" of certain liberal dictionaries? That the oligarchic device of having a special "Distinguished Usage Panel . . . of outstanding professional speakers and writers" is an attempted compromise between the forces of egalitarianism and traditionalism in English, but that most linguistic liberals dismiss the Usage Panel as mere sham-populism?

Did you know that U.S. lexicography even *had* a seamy underbelly?

The occasion for this article is Oxford University Press's recent release of Bryan A. Garner's *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage*. The fact of the matter is that Garner's dictionary is extremely good, certainly the most comprehensive usage guide since E. W. Gilman's *Webster's Dictionary of English Usage*, now a decade out of date.[1] Its format, like that of Gilman and the handful of other great American usage guides of the last century, includes entries on individual words and phrases and expostulative small-cap MINI-ESSAYS on any issue broad enough to warrant more general discussion. But the really distinctive and ingenious features of *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage* involve issues of rhetoric and ideology and style, and it is impossible to describe why these issues are important and why Garner's management of them borders on genius without talking about the historical context[2] in which *ADMAU* appears, and this context turns out to be a veritable hurricane of controversies involving everything from technical linguistics to public education to political ideology, and these controversies take a certain amount of time to unpack before their relation to what makes Garner's usage guide so eminently worth your hard-earned reference-book dollar can even be established; and in fact there's no way even to begin the whole harrowing polymeric discussion without taking a moment to establish and define the highly colloquial term *usage*.

From one perspective, a certain irony attends the publication of any good new book on American usage. It is that the people who are going to be interested in such a book are also the people who are least going to need it, i.e., that offering counsel on the finer points of U.S. English is Preaching to the Choir. The relevant Choir here comprises that small percentage of American citizens who actually care about the current status of double modals and ergative verbs. The same sorts of people who watched *Story of English* on PBS (twice) and read W. Safire's column with their half-caff every Sunday. The sorts of people who feel that special blend of wincing despair and sneering superiority when they see EXPRESS LANE—10 ITEMS OR LESS or hear *dialogue* used as a verb or realize that the founders of the Super 8 motel chain must surely have been ignorant of the meaning

[1] With the advent of online databases, Garner has access to far more examples of actual usage than did Gilman, and he deploys them to great effect. (FYI, Oxford's 1996 *New Fowler's Modern English Usage* is also extremely comprehensive and good, but its emphasis is on British usage.)

[2] Sorry about this phrase; I hate this phrase, too. This happens to be one of those very rare times when "historical context" is the phrase to use and there is no equivalent phrase that isn't even worse. (I actually tried "lexico-temporal backdrop" in one of the middle drafts, which I think you'll agree is not preferable.)

INTERPOLATION
The above ¶ is motivated by the fact that this reviewer almost always sneers and/or winces when he sees "historical context" deployed in a piece of writing and thus hopes to head off any potential sneers/winces from the reader here, especially in an article about felicitous usage.

of *supplants*. [illegible] ple like this [illegible] Syntax Snobs of the Language. Volume One. [illegible] was raised with [illegible] slightly self-mocking [illegible] outright displeasure [illegible] somebody who [illegible] and doesn't mind letting you know it.

I submit that we SNOOTs are just about the last remaining kind of truly elitist nerd. There are, granted, plenty of nerd-species in today's America, and some of these are elitist within their own nerdy purview (e.g., the skinny, carbuncular, semi-autistic Computer Nerd moves instantly up on the totem pole of status when your screen freezes and now you need his help, and the bland condescension with which he performs the two occult keystrokes that unfreeze your screen is both elitist and situationally valid). But the SNOOT's purview is interhuman social life itself. You don't, after all (despite withering cultural pressure), have to use a computer, but you can't escape language: Language is everything and everywhere; it's what lets us have anything to do with one another; it's what separates us from the animals; Genesis 11:7–10 and so on. And we SNOOTs know when and how to [illegible] adjectives and to keep participles from dangling, and we know that we know, and we know how very few other Americans know this stuff or even care, and we judge them accordingly.

It [illegible] usage resemble religious/political conservatives' [illegible] bine a missionary zeal and a near-neural faith in our beliefs' importance with a curmudgeonly hell-in-a-handbasket despair at the way English is routinely manhandled and corrupted by supposedly educated people. The Evil is all around us: boners and clunkers and solecistic howlers and bursts of yoguish linguistic methane that make any SNOOT's cheek twitch and forehead darken. A fellow SNOOT I know likes to say that listening to most people's English feels like watching somebody use a Stradivarius to pound nails. We5 are the Few, the Proud, the Appalled at Everyone Else.

KEEP IN LANE

I [illegible] U.S. English are at root political issues and can be effectively addressed only in [illegible] what this article hereby terms a "Democratic Spirit." A Democratic Spirit is one that combines rigor and humility, i.e., passionate conviction plus sedulous respect for

3 SNOOT (*n*) *Oughly co-Hoop* is this reviewer's nuclear family's and [illegible] name à *clef* for a really extreme usage fanatic, the sort of person whose idea of Sunday fun is to look for mistakes in Safire's column's prose itself. [illegible] reviewer's family is roughly 70 percent SNOOT, which term itself derives from an acronym, with the big historical family joke being that whether S.N.O.O.T. stood for "*Sprachgefuhl* Necessitates Our Ongoing Tendance" or "Syntax Nudniks of Our Time" depended on whether or not you were one.

4 This is true in my own case at any rate—plus also the "uncomfortable" part. I teach college English part-time—mostly Lit, not Comp. But I am also so pathologically anal about* usage that every semester the same thing happens: The minute I have read my students' first set of papers, we immediately abandon the regular Lit syllabus and have a three-week Emergency Remedial Usage Unit, during which my demeanor [illegible] grandfather and actually uses the word *genteel*, and probably [illegible] know how at least one parent else is, by profession or temperament or both, a SNOOT. In my own case, [illegible] remedial usage book and is a scion of the most rabid [illegible]. At least part of [illegible] for years Mom brainwashed us in [illegible] example. Family suppers often involved a game: If one of us children made a usage error, Mom would pretend to have a coughing fit that would go on and on until the relevant child had identified the relevant error and corrected it. It was all very self-ironic and lighthearted; but still, looking back, it seems [illegible] to pretend that your child is actually *denying you oxygen* by [illegible] sometimes find myself playing this same "game" with my own [illegible]

[illegible]

As something I'm all but sure [illegible] sert that we even had a lighthearted [illegible] family *song* that Mom and we little [illegible] Usually Dad simply rolled his eyes and drove (you [illegible] order to follow the song).

And fail to be concise or clear
Blunder Dog
Blunder Dog
[illegible]

[illegible] I [illegible] kid, was the actual author of this song. But by this time I'd been thoroughly brainwashed. And just about the whole car sang along. It was sort of our family's version [illegible]

5 Please note that the strategically repeated [illegible] meant to [illegible] this sentence [illegible] too, a SNOOT, plus to connote the nuclear [illegible] ADMAU's Preface, Bryan Gar- [illegible] *strated the very quality he wished to denigrate.*

the convictions of others. As any American knows, this is a very difficult spirit to cultivate and maintain, particularly when it comes to issues you feel strongly about. Equally tough is a D.S.'s criterion of 100 percent intellectual integrity—you have to be willing to look honestly at yourself and your motives for believing what you believe, and to do it more or less continually.

This kind of stuff is advanced U.S. citizenship. A true Democratic Spirit is up there with religious faith and emotional maturity and all those other top-of-the-Maslow-Pyramid-type qualities people spend their whole lives working on. A Democratic Spirit's constituent rigor and humility and honesty are in fact so hard to maintain on certain issues that it's almost irresistibly tempting to fall in with some established dogmatic camp and to follow that camp's line on the issue and to let your position harden within the camp and become inflexible and to believe that any other camp is either evil or insane and to spend all your time and energy trying to shout over them.

Goal-orientated

I submit, then, that it is indisputably easier to be dogmatic than Democratic, especially about issues that are both vexed and highly charged. I submit further that the issues surrounding "correctness" in contemporary American usage are both vexed and highly charged, and that the fundamental questions they involve are ones whose answers have to be "worked out" instead of simply found.

A distinctive feature of *ADMAU* is that its author is willing to acknowledge that a usage dictionary is not a bible or even a textbook but rather just the record of one smart person's attempts to work out answers to certain very difficult questions. This willingness appears to me to be informed by a Democratic Spirit. The big question is whether such a spirit compromises Garner's ability to present himself as a genuine "authority" on issues of usage. Assessing Garner's book, then, involves trying to trace out the very weird and complicated relationship between Authority and Democracy in what we as a culture have decided is English. That relationship is, as many educated Americans would say, still in process at this time.

A Dictionary of Modern American Usage has no Editorial Staff or Distinguished Panel. It's conceived, researched, and written *ab ovo usque ad mala* by Bryan Garner. This is an interesting guy. He's both a lawyer and a lexicographer (which seems a bit like being both a narcotics dealer and a DEA agent). His 1987 *A Dictionary of Modern Legal Usage* is already a minor classic; now, instead of practicing law anymore, he goes around conducting writing seminars for J.D.'s and doing prose-consulting for various judicial bodies. Garner's also the founder of something called the H. W. Fowler Society,[6] a worldwide group of usage-Trekkies who like to send one another linguistic boners clipped from different periodicals. You get the idea. This Garner is one serious and very hard-core SNOOT.

The lucid, engaging, and extremely sneaky Preface to *ADMAU* serves to confirm Garner's SNOOTitude in fact while undercutting it in tone. For one thing, whereas the traditional usage pundit cultivates a sort of remote and imperial persona—the kind who uses *one* or *we* to refer to himself—Garner gives us an almost WalIomishly endearing sketch of his own background:

> I realized early—at the age of 15[7]—that my primary intellectual interest was the use of the English language. . . . It became an all-consuming passion. . . . I read everything I could find on the subject. Then, on a wintry evening while visiting New Mexico at the age of 16, I discovered Eric Partridge's *Usage and Abusage*. I was enthralled. Never had I held a more exciting book. . . . Suffice it to say that by the time I was 18, I had committed to memory most of Fowler, Partridge, and their successors. . . .

Although this reviewer regrets the biosketch's failure to mention the rather significant social costs of being an adolescent whose overriding passion is English usage,[8] the critical hat is off to yet another personable section of the Preface, one that Garner entitles "First Principles": "Before going any further, I should explain my approach. That's an unusual thing for the author of a usage dictionary to do—unprecedented, as far as I know. But a guide to

[5] If Samuel Johnson is the Shakespeare of English usage, think of Henry Watson Fowler as the Eliot or Joyce. His 1926 *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* is the granddaddy of modern usage guides, and its dust-dry wit and blushless imperiousness have been models for every subsequent classic in the field, from Eric Partridge's *Usage and Abusage* to Theodore Bernstein's *The Careful Writer* to Wilson Follett's *Modern American Usage* to Gilman's '89 *Webster's*.

[7] (Garner prescribes spelling out only numbers under ten. I was taught that this rule applies just to Business Writing and that in all other modes you spell out one through nineteen and start using cardinals at 20.* *De gustibus non est disputandum.*)

**Editor's Note: The* Harper's *style manual prescribes spelling out all numbers up to 100.*

[8] From personal experience, I can assure you that any kid like this is going to be at best marginalized and at worst savagely and repeatedly Wedgied.

Could care less

EZpay

whom normative standards of English grammar and usage are functions of nothing but custom and superstition and the ovine docility of a populace that lets self-appointed language authorities boss them around. See for example MIT's Steven [illegible] introduced, a prescriptive rule is very hard to eradicate, no matter how ridiculous. Inside the writing establishment, the rules survive by the same dynamic that perpetuates ritual genital mutilations" —or, at a somewhat lower pitch, Bill Bryson in *Mother Tongue: English and How It Got That Way*:

> [illegible] one with a conjunction, that we must use *each* [illegible] two . . .? The answer, surprisingly often, is that no [illegible]

In [illegible] addresses the Authority Question with a Trumanesque simplicity and candor that simultaneously disguise the author's cunning and [illegible]

> [illegible] readers would want me to. Linguists don't like it, [illegible]
>
> And that requires judgment.

[illegible] "I don't shy away from making judgments" vs. "And that requires judgment." Suffice it to say that Garner is at all times *keenly* aware of the Authority Crisis in modern usage; and his response to this crisis is—in the best Democratic Spirit rhetorical.

So . . .

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9 What follow in the Preface are "**. . . the ten critical points that, after years of working on usage problems, I've settled on.**" **These points are too involved to treat separately, but a couple of them are slippery in the extreme—e.g., "10. Actual Usage. In the end, the actual usage of educated speakers and writers is the overarching criterion for correctness," of which both "educated" and "actual" would require several pages of abstract clarification and qualification to shore up against Usage Wars–related attacks, but which Garner rather ingeniously elects to define and defend on their application to his dictionary itself.**

10 **There's no better indication of** [illegible] **The Dictionary's authority than** [illegible] **that we use it to settle wagers. My own father is still to this day living down the outcome of a high-stakes bet in the car over the spelling of *meringue*, a wager made on 14 September 1978.**

11 ***Editor's Note: The*** **Harper's** [illegible] **present book at**

[illegible] **Linguists compose only one part of the anti-judgment camp, and their objections to usage judgments involve way more than just "subjectivity.**

The most salient and timely feature of Garner's book is that it's both lexicographical and rhetorical. Its main strategy involves what is known in classical rhetoric as the Ethical Appeal. Here the adjective, derived from the Greek *ethos*, doesn't mean quite what we usually mean by *ethical*. But there are affinities. What the Ethical Appeal amounts to is a complex and sophisticated "Trust me." It's the boldest, most ambitious, and also most distinctively American of rhetorical Appeals, because it requires the rhetor to convince us not just of his intellectual acuity or technical competence but of his basic decency and fairness and sensitivity to the audience's own hopes and fears.[13]

These are not qualities one associates with the traditional SNOOT usage-authority, a figure who pretty much instantiates snobbishness and bow-tied anality, and one whose modern image is not improved by stuff like *American Heritage Dictionary* Distinguished Usage Panelist Morris Bishop's "The arrant solecisms of the ignoramus are here often omitted entirely, 'irregardless' of how he may feel about this neglect" or critic John Simon's "The English language is being treated nowadays exactly as slave traders once handled their merchandise. . . ." Compare those lines' authorial personas with Garner's in, e.g., "English usage is so challenging that even experienced writers need guidance now and then."

The thrust here is going to be that *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage* earns Garner pretty much all the trust his Ethical Appeal asks us for. The book's "feel-good" spirit (in the very best sense of "feel-good") marries rigor and humility in such a way as to allow Garner to be extremely prescriptive without any appearance of evangelism or elitist put-down. This is an extraordinary accomplishment. Understanding why it's basically a *rhetorical* accomplishment, and why this is both historically significant and (in this reviewer's opinion) politically redemptive, requires a more detailed look at the Usage Wars.

You'd sure know lexicography had an underbelly if you read the little introductory essays in modern dictionaries—pieces like *Webster's DEU*'s "A Brief History of English Usage" or *Webster's Third*'s "Linguistic Advances and Lexicography" or *AHD-3*'s "Usage in the American Heritage Dictionary: The Place of Criticism." But almost nobody ever bothers with these little intros, and it's not just their six-point type or the fact that dictionaries tend to be hard on the lap. It's that these intros aren't actually written for you or me or the average citizen who goes to The Dictionary just to see how to spell (for instance) *meringue*. They're written for other lexicographers and critics, and in fact they're not really introductory at all but polemical. They're salvos in the Usage Wars that have been under way ever since editor Philip Gove first sought to apply the value-neutral principles of structural linguistics to lexicography in *Webster's Third*. Gove's famous response to conservatives who howled[14] when *Webster's Third* endorsed OK and described *ain't* as "used orally in most parts of the U.S. by many cultivated speakers [*sic*]" was this: "A dictionary should have no traffic with . . . artificial notions of correctness or superiority. It should be descriptive and not prescriptive." These terms stuck and turned epithetic, and linguistic conservatives are now formally known as Prescriptivists and linguistic liberals as Descriptivists.

The former are far better known. When you read the columns of William Safire or Morton Freeman or books like Edwin Newman's *Strictly Speaking* or John Simon's *Paradigms Lost*, you're actually reading Popular Prescriptivism, a genre sideline of certain journalists (mostly older ones, the vast majority of whom actually do wear bow ties) whose bemused irony often masks a Colonel Blimp's rage at the way the beloved English of their youth is being trashed in the decadent present. The plutocratic tone and styptic wit of Safire and Newman and the best of the Prescriptivists is often modeled after the mandarin-Brit personas of Eric Partridge and H. W. Fowler, the same Twin Towers of scholarly

[13] In this last respect, recall for example W. J. Clinton's famous "I feel your pain," which was a blatant if not particularly masterful Ethical Appeal.

[14] Really, *howled*: blistering reviews and outraged editorials from across the country—from the *Times* and *The New Yorker* and good old *Life*, or q.v. this from the January '62 *Atlantic*: "We have seen a novel dictionary formula improvised, in great part, out of snap judgments and the sort of theoretical improvement that in practice impairs; and we have seen the gates propped wide open in enthusiastic hospitality to miscellaneous confusions and corruptions. In fine, the anxiously awaited work that was to have crowned cisatlantic linguistic scholarship with a particular glory turns out to be a scandal and a disaster."

Prescriptivism whom Garner talks about revering as a kid.[15]

Descriptivists, on the other hand, don't have weekly columns in the *Times*. These guys tend to be hard-core academics, mostly linguists or Comp theorists. Loosely organized under the banner of structural (or "descriptive") linguistics, they are doctrinaire positivists who have their intellectual roots in the work of Auguste Comte and Ferdinand de Saussure and their ideological roots firmly in the U.S. sixties. The brief explicit mention Garner's Preface gives this crew—

> Somewhere along the line, though, usage dictionaries got hijacked by the descriptive linguists," who observe language scientifically. For the pure descriptivist, it's impermissible to say that one form of language is any better than another: as long as a native speaker says it, it's OK—and anyone who takes a contrary stand is a dunderhead. . . . Essentially, descriptivists and prescriptivists are approaching different problems. Descriptivists want to record language as it's actually used, and they perform a useful function—though their audience is generally limited to those willing to pore through vast tomes of dry-as-dust research.

—is disingenuous in the extreme, especially the "approaching different problems" part, because it vastly underplays the Descriptivists' influence on U.S. culture. For one thing, Descriptivism so quickly and thoroughly took over English education in this country that just about everybody who started junior high after c. 1970 has been taught to write Descriptively—via "freewriting," "brainstorming," "journaling," a view of writing as self-exploratory and -expressive rather than as communicative, an abandonment of systematic grammar, usage, semantics, rhetoric, etymology. For another thing, the very language in which today's socialist, feminist, minority, gay, and environmentalist movements frame their sides of political debates is informed by the Descriptivist belief that traditional English is conceived and perpetuated by Privileged WASP Males[17] and is thus inherently capitalist, sexist, racist, xenophobic, homophobic, elitist: unfair. Think Ebonics. Think of the involved contortions people can be [illegible] or of the tense deliberate way white males now adjust their vocabularies around non-w.m.'s. Think of today's endless battles over just the *names* of things—"Affirmative Action" vs. "Reverse Discrimination," "Pro-Life" vs. "Pro-Choice," "Undercount" vs. "Vote Fraud," etc.

The Descriptivist revolution takes a little time to unpack, but it's worth it. The structural linguists' rejection of conventional usage rules depends on two main arguments. The first is academic and methodological. In this age of technology, Descriptivists contend, it's the Scientific Method—clinically objective, value-neutral, based on direct observation and demonstrable hypothesis—that should determine both the content of dictionaries and the standards of "correct" English. Because language is constantly evolving, such standards will always be fluid. Gove's now classic introduction to *Webster's Third* outlines this type of Descriptivism's five basic edicts: "1—Language changes constantly; 2—Change is normal; 3—Spoken language is the language; 4—[illegible] 5—All usage is relative."

These principles look *prima facie* OK—commonsensical and couched in the bland simple s.-v.-o. prose of dispassionate Science—but in fact they're vague and muddled and it takes about three seconds to think of reasonable replies to each one of them, viz.:

1—OK, but how much [illegible] fast?

Hands-on, can-do

2—Same thing. Is Heraclitean flux as normal or desirable as gradual change? Do some changes actually serve the language's overall pizzazz better than others? And how many people have to deviate from how many conventions before we say the language has actually changed? Fifty percent? Ten percent?

3—This is an old claim, at least as old as Plato's *Phaedrus*. And it's specious. If Derrida and the infamous Deconstructionists have done nothing else, they've debunked the idea that speech is language's primary instantiation.[18] Plus consider

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[15] Note for example the mordant pith (and royal *we*) of this random snippet from Partridge's *Usage and Abusage*:

> **anxious of.** 'I am not hopeless of our future. But I am profoundly anxious of it', Beverley Nichols, *News of England*, 1938: which made us profoundly anxious *for* (or, *about*)—not *of*—Mr Nichols's literary future.

Or see the near-Himalayan condescension of Fowler, here on some other people's use of words to mean things the words don't really mean:

> **slipshod extension** . . . is especially likely to occur when some accident gives currency among the uneducated to words of learned origin, & the more if they are isolated or have few relatives in the vernacular. . . . The original meaning of *feasible* is simply doable (L *facere* do); but to the unlearned it is a mere token, of which he has to infer the value from the contexts in which he hears it used, because such relatives as it has in English—*feat, feature, faction*, &c.—either fail to show the obvious family likeness to which he is accustomed among families of indigenous words, or are (like *malfeasance*) outside his range.

[16] [illegible] body makes clear, Garner knows [illegible] started influencing language guides.

[17] (which in fact is true)

[18] [illegible] you'd probably be better off just [illegible]

the weird arrogance of Gove's (3) w/r/t correctness. Only the most mullahlike Prescriptivists care very much about spoken English; most Prescriptive usage guides concern Standard *Written* English.[19]

4—Fine, but whose usage? Gove's (4) begs the whole question. What he wants to imply here, I think, is a reversal of the traditional entailment-relation between abstract rules and concrete usage: Instead of usage ideally corresponding to a rigid set of regulations, the regulations ought to correspond to the way real people are actually using the language. Again, fine, but which people? Urban Latinos? Boston Brahmins? Rural Midwesterners? Appalachian Neogaelics?

"French provincial twin bed with canape and box spring, $150."

5—*Huh?* If this means what it seems to mean, then it ends up biting Gove's whole argument in the ass. (5) appears to imply that the correct answer to the above "which people?" is: "All of them!" And it's easy to show why this will not stand up as a lexicographical principle. The most obvious problem with it is that not everything can go in The Dictionary. Why not? Because you can't observe every last bit of every last native speaker's "language behavior," and even if you could, the resultant dictionary would weigh 4 million pounds and have to be updated hourly.[20] The fact is that any lexicographer is going to have to make choices about what gets in and what doesn't. And these choices are based on . . . what? And now we're right back where we started.

It is true that, as a SNOOT, I am probably neurologically predisposed to look for flaws in Gove et al.'s methodological argument. But these flaws seem awfully easy to find. Probably the biggest one is that the Descriptivists' "scientific lexicography"—under which, keep in mind, the ideal English dictionary is basically number-crunching; you somehow observe every linguistic act by every native/naturalized speaker of English and put the sum of all these acts between two covers and call it The Dictionary—involves an incredibly simplistic and outdated understanding of what *scientific* means. It requires a naive belief in scientific objectivity, for one thing. Even in the physical sciences, everything from quantum mechanics to Information Theory has shown that an act of observation is itself part of the phenomenon observed and is analytically inseparable from it.

If you remember your old college English classes, there's an analogy here that points up the trouble scholars get into when they confuse observation with interpretation. Recall the New Critics.[21] They believed that literary criticism was best conceived as a "scientific" endeavor: The critic was a neutral, careful, unbiased, highly trained observer whose job was to find and objectively describe meanings that were right there—literally inside—pieces of literature. Whether you know what happened to the New Criticism's reputation depends on whether you took college English after c. 1975; suffice it to say that its star has dimmed. The New Critics had the same basic problem as Gove's Methodological Descriptivists: They believed that *scientific* meant the same thing as *neutral* or *unbiased*. And that linguistic meanings could exist "objectively," separate from any interpretive act.

The point of the analogy is that claims to objectivity in language study are now the stuff of jokes and shudders. The epistemological assumptions that underlie Methodological Descriptivism have been thoroughly debunked and displaced—in Lit by the rise of post-structuralism, Reader-Response Criticism, and Jaussian Reception Theory; in linguistics by the rise of Pragmatics—and it's now pretty much universally accepted that (a) meaning is inseparable from some act of interpretation and (b) an act of interpretation is always somewhat biased, i.e., informed by the interpreter's particular ideology. And the consequence of (a) and (b) is that there's no way around it—decisions about what to put in The Dictionary and what to exclude are going to be based on a lexicographer's ideology. And every lexicographer's got one. To presume that dictionary-making can somehow avoid or transcend ideology is simply to subscribe to a particular ideology, one that might aptly be called Unbelievably Naive Positivism.

There's an even more important way Descriptivists are wrong in thinking that the Scientific Method is appropriate to the study of language:

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[19] Standard Written English (SWE) is also sometimes called Standard English (SE) or Educated English, but the inditement-emphasis is the same.

SEMI-INTERPOLATION

Plus note that Garner's Preface explicitly names *ADMAUS*'s intended audience as "writers and editors." And even ads for the dictionary in such organs as *The New York Review of Books* are built around the slogan "If you like to WRITE . . . **Refer to us.**"*

*(Yr. SNOOT rev. cannot help observing, w/r/t these ads, that the opening r in **Refer** here should not be capitalized after a dependent clause + ellipses—*Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.*)

[20] True, some sort of 100 percent compendious real-time Mega-dictionary might be possible online, though it'd take a small army of lexical webmasters and a much larger army of *in situ* actual-use reporters and surveillance techs; plus it'd be GNP-level expensive.

[21] *New Criticism* refers to T. S. Eliot and I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis and Cleanth Brooks and Wimsatt & Beardsley and the whole "close reading" school that dominated literary criticism from WWI well into the seventies.

Even if, as a thought experiment, we assume a kind of nineteenth-century scientific realism—in which, even though some scientists' interpretations of natural phenomena might be biased,[22] the natural phenomena themselves can be supposed to exist wholly independent of either observation or interpretation—no such realist supposition can be made about "language behavior," because this behavior is both *human* and fundamentally *normative*. To understand this, you have only to accept the proposition that language is by its very nature public—i.e., that there can be no such thing as a Private Language[23]—and then to observe the way Methodological Descriptivists seem either ignorant of this fact or oblivious to its consequences, as in for example one Charles Fries's introduction to an epigone of *Webster's Third* called *The American College Dictionary*:

> A dictionary can be an "authority" only in the sense in which a book of chemistry or of physics or of botany can be an "authority"—by the accuracy and the completeness of its record of the observed facts of the field examined, in accord with the latest principles and techniques of the particular science.

This is so stupid it practically drools. An "authoritative" physics text presents the results of *physicists'* observations and *physicists'* theories about those observations. If a physics textbook operated on Descriptivist principles, the fact that some Americans believe that electricity flows better downhill (based on the observed fact that power lines tend to run high above the homes they serve) would require the Electricity Flows Better Downhill Theory to be included as a "valid" theory in the textbook—just as, for Dr. Fries, if some Americans use *infer* for *imply*, the use becomes an ipso facto "valid" part of the language. Structural linguists like Gove and Fries are not, finally, scientists but census-takers who happen to misconstrue the importance of "observed facts." It isn't scientific phenomena they're tabulating but rather a set of human behaviors, and a lot of human behaviors are—to be blunt—moronic. Try, for instance, to imagine an "authoritative" ethics textbook whose principles were based on what most people actually *do*.

Norm-wise, let's keep in mind that language didn't come into being because our hairy ancestors were sitting around the veldt with nothing better to do. Language was invented to serve certain specific purposes:[24] "That mushroom is poisonous"; "Knock these two rocks together and you can start a fire"; "This shelter is mine!" And so on. Clearly, as linguistic communities evolve over time, they discover that some ways of using language are "better" than others—meaning better with respect to the community's purposes. If we assume that one such purpose might be communicating which kinds of food are safe to eat, then you can see how, for example, a misplaced modifier might violate an important norm:

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22 ("EVIDENCE OF CANCER LINK REFUTED BY TOBACCO INSTITUTE RESEARCHERS")

23 This proposition is in fact true, as is interpolatively demonstrated below, and although the demonstration is extremely persuasive it is also, as you can see from the size of this FN, lengthy and involved and rather, umm, dense, so that again you'd probably be better off simply granting the truth of the proposition and forging on with the main text.

INTERPOLATIVE DEMONSTRATION OF THE FACT THAT THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A PRIVATE LANGUAGE

It's sometimes tempting to imagine that there can be such a thing as a Private Language. Many of us are prone to lay-philosophizing about the weird privacy of our own mental states, for example, and from the fact that when my knee hurts only I can feel it, it's tempting to conclude that for me the word *pain* has a very subjective internal meaning that only I can truly understand. This line of thinking is sort of like the adolescent pot-smoker's terror that his own inner experience is both private and unverifiable, a syndrome that is technically known as Cannabic Solipsism. Eating Chips Ahoy! and staring very intently at the television's network PGA event, for instance, the adolescent pot-smoker is struck by the ghastly possibility that, e.g., what he sees as the color green and what other people call "the color green" may in fact not be the same color experiences at all. The fact that both he and someone else call Pebble Beach's fairways green and a stoplight's GO signal green appears to guarantee only that there is a similar consistency in their color experience of fairways and GO lights, not that the actual subjective quality of those color experiences is the same; it could be that what the ad. pot-smoker experiences as green everyone else actually experiences as blue, and what we "mean" by the word *blue* is what he "means" by *green*, etc., etc., until the whole line of thinking gets so vexed and exhausting that the a.p.-s. ends up slumped crumb-strewn and paralyzed in his chair.

The point here is that the idea of a Private Language, like Private Colors and most of the other solipsistic conceits with which this particular reviewer has at various times been afflicted, is both deluded and demonstrably false.

In the case of Private Language, the delusion is usually based on the belief that a word such as *pain* has the meaning it does because it is somehow "connected" to a feeling in my knee. But as Mr. L. Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* proved in the 1950s, words actually have the meanings they do because of certain rules and verification tests that are imposed on us from outside our own subjectivities, viz., by the community in which we have to get along and communicate with other people. Wittgenstein's argument, which is admittedly very complex and gnomic and opaque, basically centers on the fact that a word like *pain* means what it does for me because of the way the community I'm in part of has tacitly agreed to use *pain*.

If you're thinking that all this seems not only abstract but also pretty irrelevant to the Usage Wars or to anything you have any real interest in at all, you are very much mistaken. If words' meanings depend on transpersonal rules and these rules on community consensus, language is not only conceptually non-Private but also irreducibly *public, political* and *ideological*. This means that questions about our national consensus on grammar and usage are actually bound up with every last social issue that millennial America's about—class, race, gender, morality, tolerance, pluralism, cohesion, equality, fairness, money. You name it.

24 Norms, after all, are just practices people have agreed on as optimal ways of doing things for certain purposes. They're not laws, but they're not laissez-faire, either.

"People who eat that kind of mushroom often get sick" confuses the recipient about whether he'll get sick only if he eats the mushroom frequently or if he stands a good chance of getting sick the very first time he eats it. In other words, the community has a vested practical interest in excluding this kind of misplaced modifier from acceptable usage; and even if a certain percentage of the users screw up and use them this still doesn't make m.m.'s a good idea.

Maybe now the analogy between usage and ethics is clearer. Just because people sometimes lie, cheat on their taxes, or scream at their kids, this doesn't mean that they think those things are "good." The whole point of norms is to help us evaluate our actions (including utterances) according to what we as a community have decided our real interests and purposes are. Granted, this analysis is oversimplified; in practice it's incredibly hard to arrive at norms and to keep them at least minimally fair or sometimes even to agree on what they are (q.v. today's Culture Wars). But the Descriptivists' assumption that all usage norms are arbitrary and dispensable leads to—well, have a mushroom.



The connotations of *arbitrary* here are tricky, though, and this sort of segues into the second argument Descriptivists make. There is a sense in which specific linguistic conventions *are* arbitrary. For instance, there's no particular metaphysical reason why our word for a four-legged mammal that gives milk and goes Moo is *cow* and not, say, *prtlmpf*. The uptown phrase for this is "the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign," and it's used, along with certain principles of cognitive science and generative grammar, in a more philosophically sophisticated version of Descriptivism that holds the conventions of SWE to be more like the niceties of fashion than like actual norms. This "Philosophical Descriptivism" doesn't care much about dictionaries or method; its target is the [illegible] that prescriptive rules have their ultimate justification in the community's need to make its language meaningful.

The argument goes like this. An English sentence's being *meaningful* is not the same as its being *grammatical*. That is, such clearly ill-formed constructions as "Did you seen the car keys of me?" or "The show was looked by many people" are nevertheless comprehensible; the sentences do, more or less, communicate the information they're trying to get across. Add to this the fact that nobody who isn't damaged in some profound Oliver Sacksish way actually ever makes these sorts of very deep syntactic errors[25] and you get the basic proposition of Noam Chomsky's generative linguistics, which is that there exists a Universal Grammar beneath and common to all languages, plus that there is probably an actual part of the human brain that's imprinted with this Universal Grammar the same way birds' brains are imprinted with Fly South and dogs' with Sniff Genitals. There's all kinds of compelling evidence and support for these ideas, not least of which are the advances that linguists and cognitive scientists and A.I. researchers have been able to make with them, and the theories have a lot of credibility, and they are adduced by the Philosophical Descriptivists to show that since the really *important* rules of language are at birth already hardwired into people's neocortex, SWE prescriptions against dangling participles or mixed metaphors are basically the linguistic equivalent of whalebone corsets and short forks for salad. As Descriptivist Steven Pinker puts it, "When a scientist considers all the high-tech mental machinery needed to order words into everyday sentences, prescriptive rules are, at best, inconsequential decorations."

This argument is not the barrel of drugged trout that Methodological Descriptivism was, but it's still vulnerable to some objections. The first one is easy. Even if it's true that we're all wired with a Universal Grammar, it simply doesn't follow that *all* prescriptive rules are superfluous. Some of these rules really do seem to serve clarity and precision. The injunction against two-way adverbs ("People who eat this often get sick") is an obvious example, as are rules about other kinds of misplaced modifiers ("There are many reasons why lawyers lie, some better than others") and about relative pronouns' proximity to the nouns they modify ("She's the mother of an infant daughter who works twelve hours a day").

Granted, the Philosophical Descriptivist can question just how absolutely necessary these rules are—it's quite likely that a recipient of clauses like the above could figure out what the sentences mean from the sentences on either side or from the "overall context" or whatever. A listener can usually figure out what I really mean when I misuse *infer* for *imply* or say *indicate* for *say*, too. But many of these solecisms require at least a couple extra nanoseconds of cognitive effort, a kind of rapid sift-and-discard process, before the recipi-

[25] In his *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language* (1994), Steven Pinker puts it this way: "No one, not even a valley girl, has to be told not to say *Apples the eat boy* or *The child seems sleeping* or *Who did you meet John and?* or the vast, vast majority of the millions of trillions of mathematically possible combinations of words."

ent gets it. Extra work. It's debatable just how much extra work, but it—[illegible]—we put *some* extra neural burden on the recipient when we fail to follow certain conventions. W/r/t confusing clauses like the above, it simply seem more "considerate" to follow the rules of correct SWE . . . just as it's more "considerate" to de-slob your home before entertaining guests or to brush your teeth before picking up a date. Not just more considerate but more *respectful* somehow—both of your listener and of what you're trying to get across. As we sometimes also say about elements of fashion and etiquette, the way you use English "Makes a Statement" or "Sends a Message"—even though these Statements/Messages often have nothing to do with the actual information you're trying to transmit.

We've now sort of bled into a more serious rejoinder to Philosophical Descriptivism: From the fact that linguistic communication is not strictly dependent on usage and grammar it does *not* necessarily follow that the traditional rules of usage and grammar are nothing but "inconsequential decorations." Another way to state the objection is that just because something is "decorative" does not necessarily make it "inconsequential." Rhetorically, Pinker's flip dismissal is bad tactics, for it invites the very question it begs: inconsequential to *whom?*

Take, for example, the Descriptivist claim that so-called correct English usages such as *brought* rather than *brung* and *felt* rather than *feeled* are arbitrary and restrictive and unfair and are supported only by custom and are (like irregular verbs in general) archaic and incommodious and an all-around pain in the ass. Let us concede for the moment that these objections are 100 percent reasonable. Then let's talk about pants. Trousers, slacks. I suggest to you that having the "correct" subthoracic clothing for U.S. males be pants instead of skirts is arbitrary (lots of other cultures let men wear skirts), restrictive and unfair (U.S. females get to wear pants), based solely on archaic custom (I think it's got something to do with certain traditions about gender and leg position, the same reasons girls' bikes don't have a crossbar), and in certain ways not only incommodious but illogical (skirts are more comfortable than pants; pants ride up; pants are hot; pants can squish the genitals and reduce fertility; over time pants chafe and erode irregular sections of men's [illegible]ed legs, etc. etc.). Let us grant—as a thought experiment if nothing else—that these are all real[illegible] an androsartorial norm. Let us in fact in our minds and hearts say [illegible] skirt, the kilt, the toga, [illegible] Let us dream of or even [illegible] nobody lays any arbitrary sumptuary prescriptions on anyone else and we can all go around as comfortable and aerated and unchafed and unsquished and motile as we want.

Have all interest for 90 days!

And yet the fact remains that, in the broad cultural mainstream of millennial America, men do not wear skirts. If you, the reader, are a U.S. male, and even if you share my personal objections to pants and dream as I do of a cool and genitally unsquishy American Tomorrow, the odds are still 99.9 percent that in 100 percent of public situations you wear pants/slacks/shorts/trunks. More to the point, if you are a U.S. male and also have a U.S. male child, and if that child were to come [illegible] intention to wear a skirt rather than pants to school the next day, I am 100-percent confident that you are going to discourage him from doing so. *Strongly* discourage him. You could be a Molotov-tossing anti-pants radical or a kilt manufacturer [illegible] over your kid and be prescriptive about an arbitrary, archaic, uncomfortable, and inconsequentially decorative piece of clothing. Why? Well, because in modern America any little boy who comes to school in a skirt (even, say, a modest all-season midi) is going to get stared at and shunned and beaten up and called a Total Cieekoid by a whole lot of people whose approval and acceptance are important to him.[26] In our culture, in other words, a boy who wears a skirt is Making a [illegible] some social and emotional consequences.

You see where this is going. I'm going to describe the intended point of the pants analogy in terms I'm sure are simplistic—doubtless there are whole books in Pragmatics or psycholinguistics or something devoted to unpacking this point. The weird thing is that I've seen neither Descriptivists nor SNOOTs deploy it in the Wars.[27]

[26] **In the case of Steve Pinker Jr., those people are the boy's peers and teachers and crossing guards, etc. In the case of adult cross-dressers and drag queens who have jobs in the Straight World and wear pants to those jobs, it's co-workers and clients and people on the subway. For the die-hard slob who nevertheless wears a coat and a tie to work, it's mostly his boss, who himself doesn't want his employee's clothes to send clients "the wrong message." But [illegible] thing.**

[27] **In fact, the only [illegible] hears the issue made explicit is in radio ads for tapes that promise to improve people's vocabulary. These ads are extremely ominous and intimidating and always start out with "DID YOU KNOW PEOPLE JUDGE YOU BY THE WORDS YOU USE?"**

When I say or write something, there are actually a whole lot of different things I am communicating. The propositional content (the actual information I'm trying to convey) is only one part of it. Another part is stuff about me, the communicator. Everyone knows this. It's a function of the fact that there are uncountably many well-formed ways to say the same basic thing, from e.g. "I was attacked by a bear!" to "Goddamn bear tried to kill me!" to "That ursine juggernaut bethought to sup upon my person!" and so on. And different levels of diction and formality are only the simplest kinds of distinction; things get way more complicated in the sorts of interpersonal communication where social relations and feelings and moods come into play. Here's a familiar sort of example. Suppose that you and I are acquaintances and we're in my apartment having a conversation and that at some point I want to terminate the conversation and not have you be in my apartment anymore. Very delicate social moment. Think of all the different ways I can try to handle it: "Wow, look at the time"; "Could we finish this up later?"; "Could you please leave now?"; "Go"; "Get out"; "Get the hell out of here"; "Didn't you say you had to be someplace?"; "Time for you to hit the dusty trail, my friend", "Off you go then, love"; or that sly old telephone-conversation ender: "Well, I'm going to let you go now"; etc.[n] And then think of all the different factors and implications of each option.

The point here is obvious. It concerns a phenomenon that SNOOTs blindly reinforce and that Descriptivists badly underestimate and that scary vocab-tape ads try to exploit. People really do "judge" one another according to their use of language. Constantly. Of course, people judge one another on the basis of all kinds of things—weight, scent, physiognomy, occupation, make of vehicle[28]—and, again, doubtless it's all terribly complicated and occupies whole battalions of sociolinguists. But it's clear that at least one component of all this interpersonal semantic judging involves *acceptance*, meaning not some touchy-feely emotional affirmation but actual acceptance or rejection of somebody's bid to be regarded as a peer, a member of somebody else's collective or community or Group. Another way to come at this is to acknowledge something that in the Usage Wars gets mentioned only in very abstract terms: "Correct" English usage is, as a practical matter, a function of whom you're talking to and how you want that person to respond—not just to your utterance but also to *you*. In other words, a large part of the agenda of any communication is rhetorical and depends on what some rhet-scholars call "Audience" or "Discourse Community."[29] And the United States obviously has a huge number of such Discourse Communities, many of them regional and/or cultural dialects of English: Black English, Latino English, Rural Southern, Urban Southern, Standard Upper-Midwest, Maine Yankee, East-Texas Bayou, Boston Blue-Collar, on and on. Everybody knows this. What not everyone knows—especially not certain Prescriptivists—is that many of these non-SWE dialects have their own highly developed and internally consistent grammars, and that some of these dialects' usage norms actually make more linguistic/aesthetic sense than do their Standard counterparts (see INTERPOLATION). Plus, of course, there are innumerable sub- and subsubdialects based on all sorts of things that have nothing to do with locale or ethnicity—Medical-School English, Peorians-Who-Follow-Pro-Wrestling-Closely English, Twelve-Year-Old-Males-Whose-Worldview-Is-Deeply-Informed-By-*South-Park* English—and that are nearly incomprehensible to anyone who isn't inside their very tight and specific Discourse Community (which of course is part of their function[30]).

INTERPOLATION:
EXAMPLE OF GRAMMATICAL ADVANTAGES OF A NON-STANDARD DIALECT THAT THIS REVIEWER ACTUALLY KNOWS ABOUT FIRSTHAND

This rev. happens to have two native English dialects—the SWE of my hypereducated parents and the hard-earned Rural Midwestern of most of my peers. When I'm talking to R.M.'s, I usually

28 (. . . not to mention color, gender, creed—you can see how fraught and charged all this is going to get)

29 *Discourse Community* is an example of that rare kind of academic jargon that's actually a valuable addition to SWE because it captures something at once very complex and very specific that no other English term quite can.*

*(The above is an obvious attempt to preempt readerly sneers/winces at the term's continued deployment in this article.)

30 (Plus it's true that whether something gets called a "subdialect" or "jargon" seems to depend on how much it annoys people outside its Discourse Community. Garner himself has miniessays on AIRLINESE, COMPUTERESE, LEGALESE, and BUREAUCRATESE, and he more or less calls all of them jargon. There is no *ADMAU* miniessay on DIALECTS, but there is one on JARGON, in which such is Garner's self-restraint that you can almost hear his tendons straining, as in "[Jargon] arises from the urge to save time and space—and occasionally to conceal meaning from the uninitiated.")

use, for example, the construction "Where's it at?" instead of "Where is it?" Part of this is a naked desire to fit in and not get rejected as an egghead or fag (see *sub*). But another part is that I, SNOOT or no, believe that this and other R.M.isms are in certain ways superior to their Standard equivalents.

For a dogmatic Prescriptivist, "Where's it at?" is double-damned as a sentence that not only ends with a preposition but whose final preposition forms a redundancy with *where* that's similar to the redundancy in "the reason is because" (which latter usage I'll admit makes me dig my nails into my palms). Rejoinder: First off, the avoid-terminal-prepositions rule is the invention of one Fr. R. Lowth, an eighteenth-century British preacher and indurate pedant who did things like spend scores of pages arguing for *hath* over the trendy and degenerate *has*. The a.-t.-p. rule is antiquated and stupid and only the most ayatolloid SNOOT takes it seriously. Garner himself calls the rule "stuffy" and lists all kinds of useful constructions like "the man you were listening to" that we'd have to discard or distort if we really enforced it.

Plus the apparent redundancy of "Where's it at?"[31] is offset by its metrical logic. What the *at* really does is license the contraction of *is* after the interrogative adverb. You can't say "Where's it?" So the choice is between "Where is it?" and "Where's it at?", and the latter, a strong anapest, is prettier and trips off the tongue better than "Where is it?", whose meter is either a clunky monosyllabic-foot + trochee or it's nothing at all.

This is probably the place for your SNOOT reviewer openly to concede that a certain number of traditional prescriptive rules really are stupid and that people who insist on them (like the legendary assistant to P.M. Margaret Thatcher who refused to read any memo with a split infinitive in it, or the jr.-high teacher I had who automatically graded you down if you started a sentence with *Hopefully*) are that very most pathetic and dangerous sort of SNOOT, the SNOOT Who Is Wrong. The injunction against split infinitives, for instance, is a consequence of the weird fact that English grammar is modeled on Latin even though Latin is a synthetic language and English is an analytic language.[32] Latin infinitives consist of one word and are impossible to as it were split, and the earliest English Prescriptivists—so enthralled with Latin that their [illegible] usage guides were actually written in Latin—decided that English infinitives shouldn't be split either. Garner himself takes out after the s.i. rule in both SPLIT INFINITIVES and SUPERSTITIONS.[34] And *Hopefully* at the beginning of a sentence, as a certain cheeky eighth-grader once pointed out to his everlasting social cost, actually functions not as a misplaced modal auxiliary or as a manner adverb like *quickly* or *angrily* but as a "sentence adverb" that indicates the speaker's attitude about the state of affairs described by the sentence (examples of perfectly OK sentence adverbs are *Clearly, Basically, Luckily*), and only SNOOTs educated in the high-pedantic years up to 1960 blindly proscribe it or grade it down.

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The cases of split infinitives and *Hopefully* are in fact often trotted out by dogmatic Descriptivists as evidence that all SWE usage rules are arbitrary and stupid (which is a bit like pointing to Pat Buchanan as evidence that all Republicans are maniacs). Garner rejects *Hopefully*'s knee-jerk proscription, too, albeit grudgingly, including the adverb in his mimessay on SKUNKED TERMS, which is his phrase for a usage that is "hotly disputed . . . any use of it is likely to distract some readers." (Garner also points out somewhere [illegible] that *hopefully*, in the body of a sentence, can create some of the same two-way ambiguities as other adverbs, as in the clause "I will borrow your book and hopefully read it soon.")

Whether we're conscious of it or [illegible] and in a large number of subdialects and are probably at least passable in countless others. Which dialect you choose to

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31 (a redundancy that's a bit arbitrary, since "Where's it *from*?" isn't redundant [mainly because *whence* has vanished into semi-archaism])

32 A synthetic language uses inflections to dictate syntax, whereas an analytic language uses word order. Latin, German, and Russian are synthetic; English and Chinese, analytic.

33 (Q.v. for example Sir Thomas Smith's cortex-withering *De Recta et Emendata Linguae Anglicae Scriptione Dialogus* of 1568.)

34 But note that he's sane about it. Some split infinitives really are clunky and hard to parse, especially when there are a whole bunch of words between *to* and the verb. We will [illegible] ly and to the best of our ability respond to those charges, sniff! Garner calls "wide splits" and sensibly discourages. His overall verdict on s.i. is that some are "perfectly proper" and some iffy and some just totally bad news, and that no one wide tidy dogmatic ukase can handle all s.i. cases, and thus that "knowing when to split an infinitive requires a good ear and a keen eye"—is a good example of the way Garner distinguishes sound and helpful [illegible] objections from wacko or dogmatic objections and then incorporates the sound objections into a smarter and more flexible Prescriptivism.

use depends, of course, on whom you're addressing. More to the point, I submit that the dialect you use depends mostly on what sort of Group your listener is part of and whether you wish to present yourself as a fellow member of that Group. An obvious example is that traditional upper-class English has certain dialectal differences from lower-class English and that schools used to have courses in Elocution whose whole point was to teach people how to speak in an upper-class way. But usage-as-inclusion is about much more than class. Here's another thought experiment: A bunch of U.S. teenagers in clothes that look far too large for them are sitting together in the local mall's Food Court, and a 53-year-old man with a combover and clothes that fit comes over to them and says that he was scoping them and thinks they're totally rad and/or phat and is it cool if he just kicks it and does the hang here with them. The kids' reaction is going to be either scorn or embarrassment for the guy—most likely a mix of both. Q: Why? Or imagine that two hard-core urban black guys are standing there talking and I, who am resoundingly and in all ways white, come up and greet them with "Yo" and call them "Brothers" and ask "s'up, s'goin on," pronouncing *on* with that NYCish ōō-ŏ diphthong that Young Urban Black English deploys for a standard ŏ. Either these guys are going to be offended or they are going to think I am simply out of my mind. No other reaction is remotely foreseeable. Q: Why?

Cum-N-Go Quik Mart

Why: A dialect of English is learned and used either because it's your native vernacular or because it's the dialect of a Group by which you wish (with some degree of plausibility) to be accepted. And although it is the major and arguably the most important one, SWE is only one dialect. And it is never, or at least hardly ever, anybody's only dialect. This is because there are—as you and I both know and yet no one in the Usage Wars ever seems to mention—situations in which faultlessly correct SWE is clearly not the appropriate dialect.

Childhood is full of such situations. This is one reason why SNOOTlets tend to have a very hard social time of it in school. A SNOOTlet is a little kid who's wildly, precociously fluent in SWE (he is often, recall, the offspring of SNOOTs). Just about every class has a SNOOTlet, so I know you've seen them—these are the sorts of six- to twelve-year-olds who use *whom* correctly and whose response to striking out in T-ball is to cry out "How incalculably dreadful!" etc. The elementary-school SNOOTlet is one of the earliest identifiable species of academic Geekoid and is duly despised by his peers and praised by his teachers. These teachers usually don't see the incredible amounts of punishment the SNOOTlet is receiving from his classmates, or if they do see it they blame the classmates and shake their heads sadly at the vicious and arbitrary cruelty of which children are capable.

But the other children's punishment of the SNOOTlet is not arbitrary at all. There are important things at stake. Little kids in school are learning about Group-inclusion and -exclusion and about the respective rewards and penalties of same and about the use of dialect and syntax and slang as signals of affinity and inclusion.[35] They're learning about Discourse Communities. Kids learn this stuff not in English or Social Studies but on the playground and at lunch and on the bus. When his peers are giving the SNOOTlet monstrous quadruple Wedgies or holding him down and taking turns spitting on him, there's serious learning going on . . . for everyone except the little SNOOT, who in fact is being punished for precisely his *failure* to learn. What neither he nor his teacher realizes is that the SNOOTlet is *deficient* in Language Arts. He has only one dialect. He cannot alter his vocabulary, usage, or grammar, cannot use slang or vulgarity; and it's these abilities that are really required for "peer rapport," which is just a fancy Elementary-Ed term for being accepted by the most important Group in the little kid's life.

This reviewer acknowledges that there seems to be some, umm, personal stuff getting dredged up and worked out here;[36] but the stuff is relevant. The point is that the little A+ SNOOTlet is actually in the same dialectal position as the class's "slow" kid who can't learn to stop using *ain't* or *bringed*. One is punished in class, the other on the playground, but both are deficient in the same linguistic skill—viz.,

[35] The SNOOTlet is, as it happens, an indispensable part of other kids' playground education. The kids are learning that a Group's identity depends as much on exclusion as inclusion. They are, in other words, starting to learn about Us and Them, and about how an Us always needs a Them because being not-Them is essential to being Us. Because they're kids and it's school, the obvious Them is the teachers and all the values and appurtenances of the teacher world. This teacher-Them helps the kids see how to start to be an Us, but the SNOOTlet completes the puzzle by providing the as it were missing link: He is the Traitor, the Us who is in fact not Us but *Them*.

In sum, the SNOOTlet is teaching his peers that the criteria for membership in Us are not just age, station, inability to stay up past 9:00, etc.—that in fact Us is primarily a state of mind and a set of sensibilities. An ideology.

[36] (The skirt-in-school scenario was *not* personal stuff, FYI.)

and levels of "correctness," the ability to communicate one way with peers and another way with teachers and another with family and another with Little League coaches and so on. Most of these dialectal adjustments are made below the level of conscious awareness, and our ability to make them seems part psychological and part something else—perhaps something hardwired into the [illegible] bound as Universal Grammar—and in truth this ability is a far better indicator of a kid's "Verbal I.Q." than test scores. Besides, most U.S. English classes do far more to retard dialectal talent than to cultivate it.

Well known is the [illegible] not college-bound kids are [illegible] SWE grammar and usage much taught anymore. It's been this way for more than 20 years. The phenomenon drives Prescriptivists nuts, and it's one of the big things they cite as evidence of America's gradual murder of English. Descriptivists and English-Ed specialists counter that grammar and usage have been abandoned because scientific research proved that studying SWE grammar and usage simply doesn't help make kids better writers. Each side in the debate tends to regard the other as mentally ill or/and blinded by political ideology. Neither camp appears ever to have considered whether maybe the way prescriptive SWE was traditionally taught had something to do with its inutility.

By *way* here I'm referring not so much to actual method as to spirit or attitude. Most traditional teachers of English grammar have, of course, been dogmatic SNOOTs, and like most dogmatists they've been incredibly stupid about the rhetoric they used and the [illegible] I refer specifically to their assumption that SWE is the sole appropriate English dialect and that the only reasons anyone could fail to see this are ignorance or amentia or grave deficiencies in character. As rhetoric, this sort of attitude works only in sermons to the Elect, and as pedagogy it's disastrous. The reality is that an average U.S. student is going to go to the trouble of mastering the difficult conventions of SWE only if he sees SWE's relevant Group or Discourse Community as one he'd like to [illegible] Any trace of any sort of argument for why the correct-SWE Group is a good or desirable one (an argument that, recall, the traditional teacher hasn't given, because he's such a dogmatic SNOOT he sees no need to), the student is going to be reduced to evaluating the desirability of the SWE Group based on [illegible]

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himself.

I'm not suggesting here that an effective SWE pedagogy would require teachers to wear sunglasses and call students "Dude." What I am suggesting is that the rhetorical situation of an English class—a class composed wholly of young people whose Group identity is rooted in defiance of Adult-Establishment values, plus also composed partly of minorities whose primary dialects [illegible] SWE [illegible] come up with overt, honest, compelling arguments for why SWE is a dialect worth learning.

These arguments are hard to make—not intellectually but emotionally, politically. Because they are baldly elitist.[38] The real truth, of course, is that SWE is the dialect of the American elite. That it was invented, codified, and promulgated by Privileged WASP Males and is perpetuated as "Standard" by same. That it is the shibboleth of the Establishment and an instrument of political power and class division and racial discrimination and all manner of social inequity. These are shall we say rather *delicate* subjects to bring up in an English class, especially in the service of a pro-SWE argument, and *extra*-especially if you yourself are both a Privileged WASP Male and the Teacher and thus pretty much a walking symbol of the Adult Establishment. This reviewer's opinion, though, is that both students and SWE are bet[illegible] if [illegible] explicit and his argument overt, presenting himself as an advocate of SWE's utility rather than as a prophet of its innate superiority.

[illegible] (I believe) most important with respect to students of color, here is one version of a spiel I've [illegible] students who were (a) bright and inquisitive and (b) deficient in what U.S. higher education considers written English facility:

[illegible]

37 There are still some of these teachers around, at least here in the Midwest. You know the type: [illegible] Maids of both genders. If you had one (as I did, 1976–77), you surely remember him.

38 (Or rather the arguments re[illegible] and still [illegible]

[illegible]

dialect is called Standard Written English. [Brief overview of major U.S. dialects à la p. 50.] From talking with you and reading your essays, I've concluded [you use one or more of the first two or three variants of SBE common to our region]. Now, let me spell something out in my official Teacher-voice: The SBE you're fluent in is different from SWE in all kinds of important ways. Some of these differences are grammatical—for example, double negatives are OK in Standard Black English but not in SWE, and SBE and SWE conjugate certain verbs in totally different ways. Other differences have more to do with style—for instance, Standard Written English tends to use a lot more subordination [or, in the context of [context-specific] writing, some subset of these early-clause elaborations with commas]. Under SWE rules, writing that doesn't do this is "choppy." There are tons of differences like that. How much of this stuff do you already know? [STANDARD RESPONSE: some variation on "I know from the grades and comments on my papers that English profs don't think I'm a good writer."] Well, I've got good news and bad news. There are some otherwise smart English [students] who aren't aware that there are real dialects of English other than SWE, so when they're reading your papers they'll put, like, "Incorrect conjugation" or "Comma needed" instead of "SWE conjugates this verb differently" or "SWE calls for a comma here." That's the good news—it's not that you're a bad writer, it's that you haven't learned the special rules of the dialect they want you to write in. Maybe that's not such good news, that they were grading you down for mistakes in a foreign language you didn't even know was a foreign language. That they won't let you write in SBE. Maybe it seems unfair. If it does, you're not going to like this news: I'm not going to let you write in SBE either. In my class, you have to learn and write in SWE. If you want to study your own dialect and its rules and history and how it's different from SWE, fine—there are some great books by scholars of Black English, and I'll help you find some and talk about them with you if you want. But that will be outside class. In class—in my English class—you will have to master and write in Standard Written English, which we might just as well call "Standard White English," because it was developed by white people and is used by white people, especially educated, powerful white people. [RESPONSES by this point vary too widely to standardize.] I'm respecting you enough here to give you what I believe is the straight truth. In this country, SWE is perceived as the dialect of education and intelligence and power and prestige, and anybody of any race, ethnicity, religion, or gender who wants to succeed in American culture has got to be able to use SWE. This is How It Is. You can be glad about it or sad about it or deeply pissed off. You can believe it's racist and unjust and decide right here and now to spend every waking minute of your adult life arguing against it, and maybe you should, but I'll tell you something: If you ever want those arguments to get listened to and taken seriously, you're going to have to communicate them in SWE, because SWE is the dialect our country uses to talk to itself. African Americans who've become successful and important in U.S. culture know this; that's why King's and X's and Jackson's speeches are in SWE, and why Morrison's and Angelou's and Baldwin's and Wideman's and West's books are full of totally ass-kicking SWE, and why black judges and politicians and journalists and doctors and teachers communicate professionally in SWE. Some of these people grew up in homes and communities where SWE was the native dialect, and these black people had it much easier in school, but the ones who didn't grow up with SWE realized at some point that they had to learn it and become able to write in it, and so they did. And [INSERT NAME HERE], you're going to learn to use it, too, because I am going to make you.

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YOUR FREE GIFT!

I should note here that a couple of the students I've said this stuff to were offended—one lodged an Official Complaint—and that I have had more than one colleague profess to find my spiel "racially insensitive." Perhaps you do, too. My own humble opinion is that some of the cultural and political realities of American life are themselves racially insensitive and elitist and offensive and unfair, and that pussyfooting around these realities with euphemistic doublespeak is not only hypocritical but toxic to the project of ever actually changing them. Such pussyfooting has of course now achieved the status of a dialect—one powerful enough to have turned the normal politics of the Usage Wars sort of inside out.

I refer here to Politically Correct English (PCE), under whose conventions failing students become "high-potential" students and poor people "economically disadvantaged" and people in wheelchairs "differently abled" and a sentence like "White English and Black English are different and you better learn White English if you don't want to flunk" is not blunt but "insensitive." Although it's common to make jokes about PCE (referring to ugly people as "esthetically challenged" and so on), be advised that Politically Correct English's various pre- and proscriptions are taken very seriously *indeed* by colleges and corporations and government agencies, whose own institutional dialects now evolve under the beady scrutiny of a whole new kind of Language Police.

From one perspective, the history of PCE evinces a kind of Lenin-to-Stalinesque irony. That is, the same ideological principles that informed the original Descriptivist revolution—namely, the sixties-era rejections of traditional authority and traditional inequality—have now actually produced a far more inflexible Prescriptivism, one unencumbered by tradition or complexity and backed by the threat of real-world sanctions (termination, litigation) for those who fail to conform. This is sort of funny in a dark way, maybe, and most

criticism of PCE seems to consist in making fun of its trendiness or superficiality. This reviewer's own opinion is that prescriptive PCE is not just silly but confused and dangerous.

Usage is always political, of course, but it's complexly political. With respect to the mechanics of political change, usage conventions can function in two ways: On the one hand they can be a *reflection* of political change, and on the other they can be an *instrument* of political change. These two functions are different and have to be kept straight. Confusing them—in particular, mistaking for political efficacy what is really just a language's political symbolism—enables the Usage conviction that America ceases to be racist, or unfair, simply because Americans stop using certain vocabulary that is historically associated with elitism and unfairness. This is PCE's central fallacy—that a society's mode of expression is productive of its attitudes rather than a product of those attitudes—and of course it's nothing but the obverse of the politically conservative SNOOT's delusion that social change can be retarded by restricting change in standard usage.[40]

Forget Stalinization or Logic 101–level equivocations, though. There's a grosser irony about Politically Correct English. This is that PCE purports to be the dialect of progressive reform but is in fact—in its Orwellian substitution of the euphemisms of social equality for social equality itself—of vastly more help to conservatives and the U.S. status quo than traditional SNOOT prescriptions ever were. Were I, for instance, a political conservative who opposed taxation as a means of redistributing national wealth, I would be delighted to watch PCE progressives spend their time and energy arguing over whether a poor person should be described as "low-income" or "economically disadvantaged" or "pre-prosperous" rather than constructing effective public arguments for redistributive legislation or higher marginal tax rates on corporations. (Not to mention that strict codes of egalitarian euphemism serve to burke the sorts of painful, unpretty, and sometimes offensive discourse that in a pluralistic democracy leads to actual political change rather than symbolic political change. In other words, PCE functions as a form of censorship, and censorship always serves the status quo.)

[redacted] a guy who has four small kids and makes $12,000 a year feels more empowered or less ill-used by a [redacted] cally disadvantaged" rather than "poor." Were I he, in fact, I'd probably find the PCE term insulting [redacted] it's hypocritical and self-serving. Like many forms of Vogue Usage,[41] PCE functions primarily to signal and congratulate certain virtues in the speaker [redacted] sophistication about the political implications [redacted] ish interests of the PC far more than it serves any of the persons or groups renamed.

CLOSURE

[redacted]
GIVES OUT ALTOGETHER, ADMITTEDLY

This issue is Academic English, a cancer that has metastasized now to afflict both scholarly [redacted]

[redacted] and prose as mainstream [redacted]

[redacted] remoteness quickly reveals a very real passion, [redacted]

Maybe it's a combination of my SNOOT attitude

[40] E.g., this is the reasoning behind many Pop Prescriptivists' complaint that shoddy usage signifies the Decline of Western Civilization.

[41] *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage* includes a miniessay on VOGUE WORDS, but it's a disappointing one in that Garner does little more than list VW's that bug him and say that "vogue words have such a grip on the popular mind that they come to be used in contexts in which they serve little purpose." This is one of the rare places in *ADMAU* where Garner is simply wrong. The real problem is that every sentence blends and balances at least two different communicative functions—one the transmission of [redacted] or the transmission of [redacted] about the speaker—and Vogue Usage throws this balance off. Garner's [redacted] exactly incorrect: vogue words serve *too much* the purpose of presenting the speaker [redacted] if this is merely as with-it or hip), and people's subliminal B.S.-[redacted] and [redacted] in *ADMAU*'s entry on OBSCURI- [redacted] Usage, [redacted] Usage, [redacted]

and the fact that I end up having to read a lot of [illegible] papers, but I'm afraid I regard Academic English not as a dialectal variation but as a grotesque debasement of SWE, and loathe it even more than the stilted incoherences of Presidential English ("This is the best and only way to uncover, destroy, and prevent Iraq from reengineering weapons of mass destruction") or the mangled pieties of BusinessSpeak ("Our Mission: to proactively search and provide the optimum networking skills and resources to meet the needs of your growing business"); and in support of this utter contempt and intolerance I cite no less an authority than Mr. G. Orwell, who 50 years ago had AE pegged as a "mixture of vagueness and sheer incompetence" in which "it is normal to come across long passages which are almost completely lacking in meaning."[43]

A Taste That's All It's Own!

It probably isn't the whole explanation, but, as with the yoguish hypocrisy of PCE, the obscurity and pretension of Academic English can be attributed in part to a disruption in the delicate rhetorical balance between language as a vector of meaning and language as a vector of the writer's own résumé. In other words, it is when a scholar's vanity/insecurity leads him to write *primarily* to communicate and reinforce his own status as an Intellectual that his English is deformed by pleonasm and pretentious diction (whose function is to signal the writer's erudition) and by opaque abstraction (whose function is to keep anybody from pinning the writer down to a definite assertion that can maybe be refuted or shown to be silly). The latter characteristic, a level of obscurity that often makes it just about impossible to figure out what an AE sentence is really saying, so closely resembles political and corporate doublespeak ("revenue enhancement," "downsizing," "pre-owned," "proactive resource-allocation restructuring") that it's tempting to think AE's real purpose is concealment and its real motivation fear.

The insecurity that drives AE, PCE, and vocab-tape ads is far from groundless, though. These are tense linguistic times. Blame it on Heisenbergian Uncertainty or postmodern relativism or Image Over Substance or the ubiquity of advertising and P.R. or the rise of Identity Politics or whatever you will—we live in an era of terrible preoccupation with presentation and interpretation. In rhetorical terms, certain long-held distinctions between the Ethical Appeal, Logical Appeal (= an argument's plausibility or soundness), and Pathetic Appeal (= an argument's emotional impact) have now pretty much collapsed—or rather the different sorts of Appeals now affect and are affected by one another in ways that make it almost impossible to advance an argument on "reason" alone.

A vividly concrete illustration here concerns the Official Complaint a black undergraduate filed against this rev. after one of my little *in camera* spiels described on pages 53–54. The complainant was (I opine) wrong, but she was not crazy or stupid; and I was able later to see that I did bear some responsibility for the whole nasty administrative swivet. My culpability lay in gross rhetorical naïveté. I'd seen my speech's primary Appeal as Logical: The aim was to make a conspicuously blunt, honest argument for SWE's utility. It wasn't pretty, maybe, but it was true, plus so manifestly bullshit-free that I think I anticipated not just acquiescence but gratitude for my candor.[44] The problem I failed to see, of course, lay not with the argument per se but with the person making it—namely me, a Privileged WASP Male in a position of power, thus someone whose statements about the primacy and utility of the Privileged WASP Male dialect appeared not candid/hortatory/authoritative/true but elitist/high-handed/authoritarian/racist. Rhetoric-wise, what happened was that I allowed the substance and style of my Logical Appeal to completely torpedo my Ethical Appeal: What the student heard was just another PWM rationalizing why his Group and his English were top dog and ought "logically" to stay that way (plus, worse, trying to use his academic power over her to coerce her assent[45]).

If for any reason you happen to find yourself sharing this particular student's perceptions and

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43 This was in his 1946 "Politics and the English Language," an essay that despite its date (and its title's basic redundancy) remains the definitive SNOOT statement on Academese. Orwell's famous AE translation of the gorgeous "I saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift" in Ecclesiastes as "Objective considerations of contemporary phenomena compel the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account" should be tattooed on the left wrist of every grad student in the anglophone world.

44 Please just don't even say it.

45 (She professed to have been especially traumatized by the climactic "I am going to make you," which in retrospect was indeed a mammoth rhetorical boner.)

reaction,[46] I would ask that you bracket your feelings long enough to recognize that the PWM instructor's very modern rhetorical dilemma in that office was really no different from the dilemma faced by a male who makes a Pro-Life argument, or an atheist who argues against Creation Science, or a Caucasian who opposes Affirmative Action, or an African American who decries Racial Profiling, or anyone over eighteen who tries to make a case for raising the legal driving age to eighteen, etc. The dilemma has nothing to do with whether the arguments themselves are plausible or right or even sane, because the debate rarely gets that far—any opponent with sufficiently strong feelings or a dogmatic bent can discredit the arguments and pretty much foreclose all further discussion with a single, terribly familiar rejoinder: "Of course *you'd* say that"; "Easy for *you* to say"; "What right do *you* have . . . ?"

Now (still bracketing) consider the situation of any reasonably intelligent and well-meaning SNOOT who sits down to prepare a prescriptive usage guide. It's the millennium, post-Everything: Whence the authority to make any sort of credible Appeal for SWE at all?

It isn't that *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage* is perfect. It doesn't seem to cover *conversant in* vs. *conversant with*, for example, or *abstruse* vs. *obtuse*, or to have anything on *hereby* and *herewith* (which I tend to use interchangeably but always have the uneasy feeling I'm screwing up). Garner's got a good discussion of *used to* but nothing on *supposed to*. Nor does he give any examples to help explain irregular participles and transitivity ("The light shone" vs. "I shined the light," etc.), and these would seem to be more important than, say, the correct spelling of *huzzah* or the plural of *animalculum*, both of which get discussed. Plus there's the VOGUE WORDS snafu and the absence of a pronunciation entry on *trough*.[47] In other words, a SNOOT is going to be able to find stuff to quibble about in any usage dictionary, and *ADMAU* is no exception.

But it's still really, really good—and not just lexicographically but rhetorically, politically (if it even makes sense to distinguish these any more). As a collection of judgments, *ADMAU* is in no way [illegible] his judgments very carefully to avoid the elitism and anality of traditional SNOOTitude. He does not deploy irony or scorn or caustic wit, nor tropes or colloquialisms or contractions . . . or really any sort of verbal style at all. In fact, even though Garner talks openly about himself and uses the I-S pronoun throughout the whole dictionary, his personality is oddly effaced, neutralized. It's like he's so bland he's barely there. E.g., as this reviewer was finishing the book's final entry,[48] it struck me that I had no idea whether Bryan Garner was black or white, gay or straight, Democrat or Dittohead. What was even more striking was that I hadn't once wondered about any of this up to now; something about Garner's lexical persona kept me ever from asking where the guy was coming from or what particular agendas or ideologies were informing what he had admitted right up front were "value judgments."

Bryan Garner is a genius because *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage* pretty much resolves the Usage Wars' Crisis of Authority. Garner manages to control the compresence of rhetorical Appeals so cleverly that he appears able to transcend both Usage Wars camps and simply tell the truth, and in a way that does not torpedo his own credibility but actually enhances it. His argumentative strategy is totally brilliant and totally sneaky, and part of both qualities is that it usually doesn't seem like there's even an argument going on at all.

Garner recognizes something that neither of the dogmatic camps appears to get: Given 40 years of the Usage Wars, "authority" is no longer something a lexicographer can just presume *ex officio*. In fact, a large part of the project of any contemporary usage dictionary will consist in establishing this authority. If that

46 (The Dept. head and Dean did not, as it happens, share her reaction . . . though it would be disingenuous not to tell you that they happened also to be PWM's, which fact did not go unremarked by the complainant, such that the whole proceeding got pretty darn tense, indeed, before it was all over.)

47 To be honest, I noticed this omission only because midway through working on this article I happened to use the word *trough* in front of the same SNOOT friend who likes to compare public English to violin-hammering, and he fell sideways out of his chair, and it emerged that I have somehow all my life misheard *trough* as ending with a *th* instead of an *f* and thus have publicly mispronounced it God knows how many scores of times, and I all but burned rubber leaving [illegible] so whether perhaps the error was so common and human and understandable that Garner himself had a good-natured entry on it, but no such luck, which in fairness I don't suppose I can really [illegible]

48 [illegible]

seems rather obvious, be apprised that nobody before Garner seems to have figured it out—that the lexicographer's challenge now is to be not just accurate and comprehensive but *credible*. That in the absence of unquestioned Authority in language, the reader must now be moved or persuaded to *grant* a dictionary its authority, freely and for what appear to be good reasons.

Garner's *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage* is thus both a collection of information and a piece of Democratic rhetoric.[49] Its goal is to recast the Prescriptivist's persona: The author presents himself as an authority not in an *autocratic* sense but in a *technocratic* sense. And the technocrat is not only a thoroughly modern and palatable image of Authority but also immune to the charges of elitism/classism that have hobbled traditional Prescriptivism.

Of course, Garner really *is* a technocrat. He's a lawyer, recall, and in *ADMAU* he consciously projects a sort of Everyman legal persona: knowledgeable, dispassionate, fair, with an almost Enlightenment-grade passion for reason. His judgments about usage tend to be rendered like legal opinions—exhaustive citation of precedent (other dictionaries' judgments, published examples of actual usage) combined with clear, logical reasoning that's always informed by the larger consensual purposes SWE is meant to serve.

on accident

Also thoroughgoingly technocratic is Garner's approach to the issue of whether anybody's even going to be interested in his 700 pages of fine-pointed counsel. Like any specialist, he simply presumes that there are practical reasons why some people choose to concern themselves with SWE usage; and his attitude about the fact that most Americans "could care less" isn't scorn or disapproval but the phlegmatic resignation of a doctor or lawyer who realizes that he can give good advice but can't make you take it:

> The reality is that most people still want to use the language well.[50] They want to write effectively and to speak effectively. They want their language to be graceful at times, appropriate. They want to understand how to use words well, how to manipulate sentences, and how to move about in the language without seeming to flail. They want good grammar, but they want more: they want rhetoric[51] in the traditional sense. That is, they want to use the language deftly so that it's fit for their purposes.

It's now possible to see that all the autobiographical stuff in *ADMAU*'s Preface does more than just humanize Mr. Bryan A. Garner. It also serves to detail the early and enduring passion that helps make someone a credible technocrat—we tend to like and trust experts whose expertise is born of a real love for their specialty instead of just a desire to be expert at something. In fact, it turns out that *ADMAU*'s Preface quietly and steadily invests Garner with every single qualification of modern technocratic Authority: passionate devotion, reason, and accountability (recall "in the interests of full disclosure, here are the ten critical points . . ."), experience ("that, after years of working on usage problems, I've settled on"), exhaustive and tech-savvy research ("For contemporary usage, the files of our greatest dictionary makers pale in comparison with the full-text search capabilities now provided by NEXIS and WESTLAW"), an even and judicious temperament (see e.g. this from HYPERCORRECTION: "Sometimes people strive to abide by the strictest etiquette, but in the process behave inappropriately"[52]), and the sort of humble integrity (for instance, including in one of the entries a past published usage-error of his own) that not only renders Garner likable but transmits the same kind of reverence for English that good jurists have for the law, both of which are bigger and more important than any one person.

Probably the most attractive thing about *ADMAU*'s Ethical Appeal, though, is Garner's scrupulous consideration of the reader's concern about his (or her) *own* linguistic authority and rhetorical persona and ability to convince an Audience that he cares. Again and again, Garner frames his prescriptions in rhetorical terms, e.g.: "To the writer or speaker for whom credibility is important, it's a good idea to avoid distracting *any* readers or listeners." *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage*'s real thesis, in other words, is that the purposes of the expert authority and the purposes of the lay reader are identical, and identically rhetorical—which I submit is about as Democratic these days as you're going to get. ■

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[49] (meaning *literally* Democratic—it Wants Your Vote)

[50] The last two words of this sentence, of course, are what the Usage Wars are about: whose "language" and whose "well"? The most remarkable thing about this sentence is that coming from Garner it doesn't sound naive or obnoxious but just . . . reasonable.

[51] Did you think I was kidding?

[52] (Here this reviewer's indwelling and ever-vigilant SNOOT can't help but question why Garner uses a comma before the conjunction in this sentence, since what follows the conjunction is neither an independent clause nor any kind of plausible complement for *strive to*. But respectful disagreement between people of goodwill is of course Democratically natural and healthy and, when you come right down to it, kind of fun.)

STAR OF JUSTICE

On the job with America's Toughest Sheriff

By Barry Graham

You are a citizen of the county protected by America's Toughest Sheriff.

Your name is Richard Post. You're paraplegic, but you've made the best of what you have. Your legs are useless, but your arms are powerful. At age thirty-five, you've bought a home, raised a kid, and you're studying for a college degree. You have a life. Then, in one night, most of it is taken away from you.

It happens ten years after the car accident that put you in the wheelchair. It's the night of St. Patrick's Day, 1996, and you're at home in Phoenix, Arizona, watching Mike Tyson destroy Frank Bruno, the crystal-chinned English heavyweight. After the fight, you feel like going out. So you head for an Irish pub named O'Connor's.

The atmosphere is cordial, and in the space of an hour you have two drinks. There's a folkie providing live music. As he finishes a song, you wheel yourself over to him and tell him the result of the fight. He announces it, expecting that the Irish-American patrons will be pleased to hear that Bruno lost. Some people cheer and some people boo.

You hang out for a while, chat with some people. An older guy comes up to you and says, "Why don't you get the hell out of here?"

Barry Graham is the author of [illegible] *including* Before and *The Book of Mar.*

You don't understand what his problem is. "Why, did you bet on the Englishman?" you ask.

"I'm calling the police," he tells you and walks away.

You think he's kidding, so you don't worry. But he means it. His name is James O'Connor, and he owns the pub. He calls the cops, then comes back and tells you they're on their way.



RESTRAINING CHAIR, MADISON STREET JAIL

You still don't get it. But if the cops really are coming, you don't want them to stop you on the road, since you've been drinking. So you decide to wait for them and talk to them in the bar.

The cops who arrive are named Jeffrey Howell and James Ray. In their report, they will claim that the owner of the bar said that you were drinking heavily and that you called him "a Protestant and an Englishman." They will describe you as "extremely intoxicated." But the owner will deny this and will insist that you weren't drunk. He will claim that he called the cops because you were bothering his customers. He has been drinking as well.

The cops tell you to take a taxi home or they'll take you to jail. You refuse, and say you'll just roll yourself home in your wheelchair. The cops arrest you. They will say later that you challenged them to arrest you. You will say that you wouldn't do such a thing, knowing that you were carrying some pot in your backpack. They search you and find the pot, all 1.1 grams of it. They take you to the Madison Street Jail, in Downtown Phoenix.

There's a videotape of you being searched and booked into jail. On the tape, you seem lucid and co-operative, not giving the jailers any attitude at all. The tape shows you explaining to them that the urine bag attached to your ankle is full. Unless you empty the bag and get an internal catheter, you won't be able to piss. And you need to.

"This is a jail, not a hospital," you're told.

You get to see a nurse, and you tell her you have special needs. "Do you have a Medi-Mart bracelet?" she asks you.

"I'm in a wheelchair," you tell her.

Your bladder hurts, and you're scared. Paraplegics are very susceptible to kidney disease caused by unsanitary and infrequent urination. As you're rolled to your cell, a jailer says,

How — it's little to no between what you need and what you get in here. Don't be a baby."

They leave you in the cell. You keep trying to get their attention, to try to explain that you need a catheter, but the guard tells you to shut up. You leave on the cell lights for a while, but nothing happens.

You decide to empty your urine bag, and then try to make yourself piss by manipulating your abdomen with your hands. But you can't reach the toilet. You accidentally knock a roll of toilet paper into the bowl, and that gives you an idea.

You start flushing the toilet. You do it again and again. It fills with water.

A guard tells you he'll turn off the water unless you stop.

You don't stop. You tell them again that you need a catheter. Water spills out of the toilet, over the floor, out into the hall.

Sergeant Steve Kenner responds. But he doesn't have a catheter. He has you put in a restraint chair instead.

You tell him you need a pad to sit on or you'll develop sores that might need surgery. "Too bad," he tells you. The nurse takes a look and says you need a pad. Kenner says they have to clean up the water first because it's a safety hazard. They could just move the restraint chair away from the water, but they don't.

They leave you like that for two hours. When they finally put the pad in place, Kenner sparks a stun gun close to you in bed, then hands it to his partner. "Hit that fucker if he moves," he tells his partner.

He slips the straps a little, then slides the pad halfway under your buttocks. Then Kenner pulls the straps tight so that they cut into your flesh.

They leave you like that for six hours. In that time, your anus becomes lacerated. You're in for four months. Doctors consider giving you a temporary colostomy. You have to drop out of college. You lose feeling in your right arm. It withers and becomes thin. You can't raise it above your shoulder. You can't write with it. And there is a numbness in your left hand.

A doctor tells you he must operate on your neck. He asks you how the damage happened. You tell him, and he changes his mind. He says he knows there's going to be litigation, and he wants nothing to do with it.

You plead with him. "All I want is for you to fix me." You tell him you don't want him to testify on your behalf. He's apologetic but firm. He wants nothing to do with you.

You were luckier than many. You left the jail alive.

You are a citizen of the county protected by America's Toughest Sheriff.

He is a loving husband, proud father, idealist, megalomaniac, liar, and bully. His nose is purple, his neck is red, and he has the charm of Archie Bunker. A cheerful, garrulous man who enjoys watching executions and often doesn't know where he is or why he is there. Some call him a murderer. Some call him insane. Amnesty International calls him a human-rights violator. Robert Mitchum's son wrote a screenplay about him. He is the most popular politician in the state of Arizona, and, with an 85 percent approval rating, perhaps the most popular in the history of the state. He is so popular that, even though his most recent election campaign was almost completely passive, he still took 67 percent of the vote. Approaching his eighth decade, he looks younger than he is. He's squat and robust, still has a head full of hair, and the hair contains more black than gray. He has a belligerent look and a hearty manner. His small eyes often seem unfocused and confused, and sometimes gleam with childish spite.

Joe Arpaio [pronounced Ar-pie-oh] was born in 1932 in Springfield, Massachusetts. His parents came from Naples, and he still proudly calls himself an Italian. His mother died while giving birth to him, and he spent much of his childhood being shunted between three different families. These are chapters of his life he recounts without bitterness, just part of his story. As a child, he always wanted to be a cop. When he graduated from high school, he enlisted in the army. He claims to be a Korean War veteran, but in fact he spent the war in France. When he was discharged, he joined the metropolitan police in Washington, D.C. He met his wife, Ava, and they have now been married for forty-five years. They spent some time in Las Vegas, where he was on the force. Then he spent more than two decades with the Drug Enforcement Administration, working in Chicago, Turkey, and Mexico, and, finally, serving four years as head of the DEA in Arizona before retiring.

He was elected sheriff of Maricopa County in 1993. He'd spent the ten years since his retirement running a travel agency with his wife, selling, or trying to sell, trips to outer space, among other vacations. But he missed the limelight.

The county sheriff at the time was Tom Agnos, a capable if unremarkable cop who was popular enough until somebody went into a Buddhist temple in Phoenix and shot some people to death. Agnos arrested a bunch of kids and charged them with murder. The resulting lawsuit for wrongful arrest cost the county $2.8 million and Agnos his job.

Arpaio replaced him.

In a city where crime and development are growing together, Arpaio had the answers that the frightened people wanted to hear. He declared war on crime and billed himself as "America's Toughest Sheriff." He assembled a "sheriff's posse" staffed entirely by volunteers. He declared that criminals would no longer be released just because of overcrowding in the



county jails; instead he used Korean War army tents to create the Tent City Jail, located on the outskirts of Phoenix. In this part of Arizona, the summer temperatures can reach more than 120 degrees.

The county's eight jails are now home to more than 7,400 inmates, double the number there were before Arpaio became sheriff. Arpaio announced that the inmates would not be allowed coffee, cigarettes, or pornography. The only TV available would be broadcasts of Newt Gingrich and C-Span. The inmates would be forced to wear pink underwear. They would be fed green bologna, for which they would be charged; he brags that the meals fed to his prisoners are the cheapest in America's penal system, costing Maricopa County only 30 cents a meal. Inmates, both men and women, would be put on chain gangs and forced to dig graves. (He didn't mention that the chain gangs are voluntary and that the inmates had already been used to dig graves.) Arpaio's message was straightforward: jail should be about punishment, and the punishment should be so unpleasant that no one who experienced it would ever want to go through it again.

The public loved this. Finally, someone was letting criminals know that it was a war, and criminals were the enemy. Arpaio attained a level of



INMATE IN TENT CITY JAIL

celebrity matched by only one other resident of Maricopa County—Alice Cooper. And their status is similar. Arpaio is treated not as a politician but as a rock star. Wherever he goes, people point at him, come up to him, want to shake hands with him. He has appeared on dozens of talk shows, including *Donahue* and *Politically Incorrect*. He has his own local radio show.

Nick Hentoff is a lawyer who, in true Arizona style, is a member of both the National Rifle Association and the American Civil Liberties Union. In 1993 he was representing indigent inmates of the county jails, and he began noticing similarities in their accounts of torture by Arpaio's guards. He filed suit on behalf of several such inmates, including Richard Post. When the caseload became too much for him, he brought in another attorney, Lee Robbins. The lawsuits alleged that Arpaio created and nurtured a climate that encouraged the guards to abuse inmates.

The lawyers had a difficult task ahead of them. Arpaio's popularity is like the summer heat in Arizona—it's so relentless, so overwhelming, that it's hard to imagine challenging it. When I told people what had happened to Richard Post, the most common response was, "Well, what had he done?" If Arpaio's guards had tortured [illegible] he must have done something to deserve it. If other inmates were [illegible] it must have been [illegible]. Criminals shouldn't be mollycoddled. No one wanted to hear that 70 percent of those in jail hadn't been convicted of anything. They were awaiting trial, hadn't had the money to make bail, and were presumed innocent.

The lawsuits started coming down, nearly [illegible] and [illegible] an inmate



The money awarded in damages, people thought, was a worthwhile cost [illegible]. In 1996 the federal government started an investigation [illegible]; [illegible].

In 1997 Arpaio's chief deputy, David Hendershott, was allowed to retire on full pension—and then was immediately hired again, at full salary, [illegible] to keep the position. It caused a scandal, but Arpaio's popularity remained intact. If there was corruption in [illegible], well, at least we [illegible] and the war on crime

Arpaio's publicity-seeking continued. Reporters gathered around his news conference. "Joe Shows." He announced that there would be a "pet posse" to arrest people who abused animals, that he would use vacant jail



SHERIFF JOE GREETING A SUPPORTER

cells to house dogs, and that more money would be spent on feeding police dogs than on feeding the inmates, because the dogs deserve better. He announced that inmates who insulted guards would be fed only bread and water (the bread was fortified), while he was spending $70,000 on an armored car. When someone left a metal sculpture of a spider on his lawn, he claimed it was a threat on his life, retaliation for telling some of his fans on the Internet [illegible] and the shooters Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold). How did Arpaio make this connection? "It was a website. And [illegible] that," he said.

To understand Joe Arpaio, you have to understand Phoenix. In most American cities in most American states, it would be impossible for him to get elected and remain in power. Even a hundred miles down the highway, in Tucson, it would be impossible. But this is not Tucson. This is the desert metropolis that is devouring Arizona's Valley of the Sun.

It is the seventh-largest municipality in America, an apocalyptic, science-fiction cityscape of freeways and broad, empty streets under a cruel sun. There are no store-lined streets, only strip malls. Many central neighborhoods don't have sidewalks, because nobody can walk anywhere. A "right-to-work" state, which means workers have no right to job security or benefits. A place where gangs and violence are out of control, and those who aren't convicted felons can legally wander public places with a gun dangling from their belt, just like they could a century ago. A place that is considered the best-run city in America by *Governing* magazine.

Phoenix has always been a hustle, a scam, a get-rich-quick scheme. Arpaio is not anomalous. He is a proud bearer of the city's heritage. Phoenix was founded by a drunk and an opium addict. Jack Swilling was also an army scout, army deserter, teamster, farmer, prospector, speculator—anything he thought would make him a fast buck. Born in South Carolina in 1830, Swilling was thirty-seven when he found himself passing through the valley. Few settlers lived here, but Swilling could find a potential hustle anywhere, and a new one occurred to him when he saw the remains of the irrigation canals left behind by the Hohokam Indians when they disappeared 400 years earlier. He set up the Swilling Irrigating and Canal Company, hired sixteen employees, had them clean some of the canals, and started growing hay to sell to nearby Fort McDowell.

Soon other people came to the valley. By 1870 there were 235 residents. A year later, the valley separated from Yavapai County. John T. Alsap came down from Prescott to be our first mayor. Interested parties fought over where to locate the county seat. There was bribery, fraud, intimidation, and, in the end, a town site was prepared on Central and Washington.

Welcome to Phoenix, best-run city in America.

No one knows who named the town "Phoenix." We do know that it wasn't Swilling. He carried on drinking and brawling, and ended up in prison for a robbery that there's little evidence he committed. In 1880, two years after his death, Phoenix had a population of 1,708. Back then, chain gangs of prisoners were used to clean the streets, which were made from beer bottles—just like today, only now we have concrete. By the turn of the century the population stood at 5,544. The first cars arrived, and people suffering from tuberculosis came to the valley in the hopes of a longer life. But they had to have money; in 1903, in an attempt to drive out poor people



with TB, tents were banned within the city limits. Tent cities soon encircled Phoenix.

By 1930, Phoenix was the largest city in the state—the second largest in the Southwest—with a population of 48,118. The population reached 65,414 only a decade later, and by 1955 it had more than doubled, to 156,000. Five years later the city boasted 439,170. At century's end, an *Arizona Republic* poll found that more than half of the city's 1,276,510 residents would leave right away if they could.

In the collective mind of the rest of the country, Phoenix is a retirement community, where residents spend hot and sleepy days playing golf. In reality, this is a city of the very young, a place not of cactus and sand but of asphalt and glass. In the cafés and bars of central Phoenix, it's hard to find a native of the city. Everybody is from someplace else, and nobody plans to stay. Everybody wants to make some money and then move on. But not everybody manages to make money. Phoenix is a boomtown where nearly a quarter of the children live in poverty.

If there's any one thing that distinguishes Phoenix, it's that the city is still becoming. There may be arguments as to what it's becoming, but no one can reasonably doubt that the place is still giving birth to itself. Everything here is so stark, so obvious; everyone is on the make, everything is a hustle, everyone wants something from someone else. This is true of every place, but in Phoenix it's undisguised. The city lacks the sophistication even to attempt to conceal its hungers and lusts.

An explanation of what went wrong with Phoenix can be found, appropriately enough, in the opening scenes of a classic horror movie. Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, released forty years ago, begins with a bird's-eye view of Phoenix. The city was instantly recognizable—Camelback Mountain, the downtown skyline . . .

And it's still instantly recognizable. When you freeze the frame and look closely, it's hard to see any difference. Forty years of growth, and no change in the skyline?

Normally, development is preceded by planning. Not here. We've just thrown buildings up wherever we thought they were needed. We've built out, instead of up. To get from one place to another, instead of taking elevators and walking, you have to drive. And everything is farther than it seems. You realize this when you decide to walk to any place you think is nearby, a handy place you drive to every day. What seemed like a stroll turns out to be a hike. The Sonoran desert is vanishing at a rate so fast it sometimes seems as if the developers have invented a bomb that throws up ugly buildings wherever it explodes. If I let two months go by without driving southeast to Tucson on Interstate 10, on my next trip I feel as though I'm driving an unfamiliar route, so much desert has been replaced by so much new development. The city is consuming the desert at one acre per hour. Few of us object to this. And although it's painful to admit, some of us are excited by the sheer spectacle of the carnage. I can't help it.

The growth, the maniacal expansion, has nothing to do with the development of community. In spite of the boom, the community has not grown wealthier. Instead, people have come here and grown wealthy. One of the factors that make the valley attractive to big business is the low wages. Poor neighborhoods, barrios, reservations, ne'ighoods, left to themselves, and the rest of us hear about them only when the constantly simmering violence reaches the boiling point and spills out into other areas.

As business booms, so does thug life. Industry is flourishing, and so are gangs. Motorola. Honeywell. Bank One Ballpark. U-Haul. The Park South Crips. Victoria Varrio Locos. Las Cuatros Milpas. Between 1990 and 1994, gang-related homicide increased by 800 percent; Phoenix now has more than 300 gangs.

As the new century begins, the *Arizona Republic* reports that its shelters have become glutted with cell phones. Although in keeping with the paper's boosterism, this claim is simply not true. The reality is that violence has kept pace with development. Four years ago, when a county supervisor supported the public bankrolling of the Bank One Ballpark without letting the public vote on it, someone shot her in the ass.

This is Joe Arpaio's kingdom.

A Republican presidential candidate, a Democratic U.S. attorney, the governor of Arizona, and a former hit man for the mob all have something in common: they fear him.

It is October 1997. Senator John McCain is a local institution. He will later run for president and seduce the media with his blunt, tell-it-like-it-is persona. He survived years of torture as a prisoner of war in Vietnam, and there are many who consider him a hero. But tonight he's dealing with Joe Arpaio, and John McCain is nervous.

It's a private party at a house in Scottsdale, a wealthy suburb just outside of Phoenix. It costs $100 dollars to attend this fund-raiser for Joe Arpaio. Why he's raising funds right now is not something he's willing to talk about; the next election for sheriff is three years away. But everyone knows he's thinking about running for governor. You'd have to be missing a chromosome not to know that—for weeks, he hasn't been able to get through an interview without someone asking whether a man could govern and be sheriff.

Joe Arpaio knows it, too. That's why he's here tonight. She's the sitting governor. He inherited the job a few



a million as when her predecessor, Fife Symington, was convicted on six counts of fraud. If Arpaio runs against her, she doesn't stand a chance.

The party is outdoors. The winter night is warmer than a summer night in many other states. There's a raised stage with a public address system, and the large garden is crowded with tables. There are about two hundred people present, all of them white. Although the party is private, a CNN crew has been invited by Arpaio, and a few reporters have gained entry by forking over the admission fee.

The event is hosted by two women who look like they're in an amateur theater's production of *Anne of Green Gables*. One of them kicks off the proceedings by declaiming, "I have not met a single person who did not love Sheriff Joe." Saying this, she sets the tone for the entire evening. The name "Arpaio" is rarely mentioned. He's "Sheriff Joe," a cartoon character, the [illegible] of law enforcement.

When the Stepford Hostesses have finished simpering, John McCain gets his turn. When he runs for president, he will be doomed in Arizona if he doesn't have Arpaio's endorsement. So he recites the words: "This is a safer county since we have been blessed with Sheriff Joe."

He is either offensively ignorant or simply lying.

The emcee is Ron Masak, an actor who plays a sheriff on TV. He says he'd like to play Arpaio. He declares that Arpaio is "a hell of a man . . . who went into Tent Village alone and unarmed—and went to sleep!" The audience laughs and applauds. Arpaio nods and smiles modestly. Masak neglected to mention the reporter Arpaio brought along to mythologize his night exploits or the SWAT team and sharpshooter he had stationed nearby. Masak says that although Arpaio has been criticized for the chain gangs, what people don't know is that the inmates volunteer for them. He doesn't explain that Arpaio himself hid this fact.

Governor Jane Hull takes the stage, and she seems even more nervous than Mr. Congeniality Sheriff. "I am a great motivator," she says. "People with new ideas are always criticized at first . . . My favorite innovation is the pink underwear." She doesn't say how this improved the standard of law and order in Maricopa County. She asks Arpaio to come onstage; she wants to make a donation to his campaign fund. "It's for *Sheriff* Joe Arpaio in the year 2000," she says pointedly. Arpaio grins at her. "Well," he says. "You're doing a good job . . . for now."

Later, there's a set from a country band, Tex Hill and the Rhinestone Rangers. Tex, the lead singer, is in the Sheriff's posse. The bassist says his favorite thing about Arpaio's gulag is "girls in chains." Tex invites Arpaio onstage. "I wrote a song about Sheriff Joe," he says. Arpaio stands there, hands folded, smiling humbly as Tex serenades him. "Sheriff Joe Arpaio, Sheriff Joe Arpaio/He's the toughest sheriff in the West/Sheriff Joe Arpaio, Sheriff Joe Arpaio/He wears the star of justice on his chest . . ."

Six days later, it is Halloween, and another political production is under way.

Janet Napolitano represented Anita Hill. Her reputation is that of a pugnacious, spirited lawyer who knows the difference between right and wrong. But today she's not dealing with Clarence Thomas. She's dealing with Joe Arpaio. And Janet Napolitano is nervous.

This is her last day as U.S. attorney. She, too, is thinking of running for governor. And to have a chance of success, she needs Arpaio's endorsement. So they're having a joint news conference.

The federal government has been investigating reports of brutality in his jails. Today it has filed a lawsuit over it, but it has agreed to drop the lawsuit in six months if Arpaio implements certain changes to use of force policy in the jails. Essentially, the feds have found Arpaio guilty and have put him on probation. Not that you'd know it from the news conference.

One of the reasons the conference has been called is to address the contents of a report on the use of force in the jails, compiled by George E. Sullivan, a corrections consultant, who was chosen "to serve as a mutually agreeable expert consultant for the United States and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office [MCSO] in the United States' ongoing investigation into certain aspects of conditions of confinement in the Maricopa County Jails."

In speeches that border on the surreal, both Napolitano and Arpaio declare that the report has exonerated him. When the subject of the lawsuit is raised, Napolitano dismisses it as "a technicality."

When a reporter asks Napolitano whether she believes the allegations against Arpaio, she says, "I'm not going to comment on the allegations." When another reporter suggests that her embrace of Arpaio might be motivated by her gubernatorial aspirations, she answers, "People can be cynical."

Arpaio briefly talks about how he's "famous all over the world," then says he doesn't consider the federal government's investigation to be an investigation; it's a "management structure." He says his critics pick on him because of personal agendas. Although he has agreed to implement the changes recommended by the feds, at the same time he says that nothing will change. "The chain gangs stay. The tents stay. The pink underwear stays. All my programs stay."

As I walk out of that conference, logic be damned, I almost believe that he has been exonerated. His performance, and Napolitano's, have been that brazen. At that point I haven't seen the report, which hasn't been made available to the public.

It takes me another two months to obtain the report. On the day that I get it, I go to a bar, get a beer, and sit down at a table with the report and a highlighter. I'm planning to mark any passages that condemn Arpaio. It doesn't take long for me to abandon that idea—or else I'd have to highlight at least three quarters of the fifty-page document. Now that the report is in the hands of people like me, Arpaio changes his story. Instead of claiming exoneration, he now says that the report is based on "innuendo." Here are some of Sullivan's "innuendos":

- [Inmates entering Intake] have probably been subjected to varieties of force—stun guns, pepper spray, billy clubs, hog-tying, fists, etc. . . .
- [MCSO Pepper Spray/Foam devices

(should) be immediately REMOVED from all staff and any further use strictly prohibited.

- There is also evidence which can be read to reveal the use of Stun Guns and OC Pepper Spray/Foam after restraint had been achieved, for no apparent justifiable reason . . .
- I would not have one of these Restraint Chairs on the property. I cannot suggest any justifiable value to be derived from the Restraint Chair.
- The Inmate Grievance System is dysfunctional . . .
- [S]taffing is below levels needed for safety and humane operations of the jails.
- [The intake facility is] a very unmanageable, dangerous environment.
- Use of Force was unprovoked, unnecessary, and, consequently, unjustified and excessive.

Sullivan dryly remarks, "It is not surprising that litigation was invited and that the image of the MCSO became negative in some professional circles."

McCain groveled. Napolitano lied. It didn't do either of them any good. Napolitano ended up running for attorney general. She won, but Arpaio endorsed her opponent, a Republican. McCain asked Arpaio to endorse his presidential campaign, but Arpaio went with Bush. Jane Hull is still governor; Arpaio called a news conference to announce that he wasn't going to run. At least not yet.

His name is Salvatore Gravano, but he is known as Sammy the Bull, and since moving to Phoenix he has turned out to have a lot in common with Joe Arpaio. Like Arpaio, he has become a celebrity. Like Arpaio, he has had an autobiography ghostwritten. Just as "Sheriff Joe" is a household name, so is "Sammy the Bull." He has killed at least nineteen people and says he does not regret it. Arpaio will not disclose how many have died in his custody, and he has expressed no regret.

Sammy the Bull was a hit man for the Mafia. He gets angry when people call him a serial killer, because he thinks serial killers are crazy, unlike him. He emphasizes that he killed only because it was his job. He turned stool pigeon and was instrumental in helping federal prosecutors convict John Gotti. He went into the witness-protection program, but he soon missed the limelight. So he came here and went public, hanging out in a coffeehouse and talking to anyone who wanted to talk to him. He soon amassed a following, mainly among goth kids and twenty-somethings who think murder is cool. He sat in the café, played chess, greeted his admirers, held court. He wore a black suit, even in the summer, and told stories of his Mafia days and the people he had killed. He signed copies of his book. When asked if he was afraid that the mob would come for him, he said no. They might kill him, but he'd be sure to take a couple of them with him.

Sammy the Bull seemed to have become a legitimate businessman. He had a construction company in Phoenix and a restaurant in Scottsdale, but at some point he decided to get involved in one of Phoenix's booming industries: Ecstasy. Costing around $25 a hit, the drug is popular with the club kids who hang out at raves and the yuppies who hang out in the clubs of Tempe and Scottsdale. In February last year, Sammy the Bull, his wife, daughter, son, nephew, niece, and some friends were charged with importing 100,000 doses of Ecstasy each month.

Since then, Sammy the Bull has been in the custody of Sheriff Joe.

His bail has been set at $5 million, which he says he doesn't have. All his assets were seized under racketeering laws. He lost his businesses, cars, a boat, jewelry, and guns. If he's convicted on any criminal charge — and the evidence against him is so overwhelming that it's difficult to imagine how he could not be — his plea agreement with the feds is void, and he can be prosecuted for the murders he was originally granted immunity from in exchange for his testimony against Gotti.

It's the stuff of B movies or pulp fiction, and since Sammy will probably be Joe's guest for quite a while it occurs to me that it might be interesting to see what they have to say about each other, maybe get them together to shoot the breeze. Sheriff Joe isn't averse to the idea, but when I call Sammy the Bull's lawyer he won't consider the proposition.

The lawyer's name is Larry Hammond. "Think about it," he says. "My client is in the custody of a notoriously vindictive sheriff, and he expects to remain in his custody for some time. Until this trial is over, the only thing Sammy has to say about Joe Arpaio is that he has never met a sheriff he loved so much, and would like to kiss Arpaio right on the lips."

Sammy the Bull isn't afraid of the mob coming after him. But, along with John McCain and Janet Napolitano, he's afraid to say anything that might antagonize Joe Arpaio.

Steve Benson is a cop and a Pulitzer Prize–winning cartoonist who for the past twenty years has worked for the *Arizona Republic*. When I call, he speaks slowly and thoughtfully, like a cop testifying in court. He tells me about a day in November 1996, when he watched a man be executed.

"He had invited me to witness his execution. Joe Arpaio was there, too. It was a very hard thing to watch, a man being put to death. As we were coming out of the death house, I was about twenty feet in front of Joe Arpaio. He recognized me, and shouted, 'I'm glad you came to see what we do to murderers.' He was swaggering, smiling, jocular . . .

"[In 1999], two police officers were killed in the line of duty. I went to their funerals, in uniform, to pay my respects. At one of the funerals, Arpaio was outside the church, in the parking lot. I went to shake hands with him. I said, 'How are you?' And he yelled, 'Why do you always draw me so fat? I'm gonna sue you! I've lost weight . . .'

"He likes to think he's a celebrity. I think perhaps he's overcompensating. Why, despite his clownish attention-getting antics, do voters like him so much? Because he treats criminals the way his supporters would like to treat them. He humiliates them, feeds them crummy food. Not that some people don't deserve to be in jail . . . but he capitalizes on their misfortune for political gain. All that matters to him is getting on comedy shows like *Politically Incorrect*. He's convinced his supporters that he's making a difference. People want to believe that, and he's

playing the role. And he'll continue to [illegible]. God help us."

I ask Benson what he thinks of Arpaio's impact as a law enforcer.

"Well, since Joe Arpaio became sheriff, I have not been assaulted by a single metal spider . . . I want to thank Joe personally for that. I now [illegible] in my bed at night."

It is summer, 2000, and Joe Arpaio isn't doing much campaigning. He doesn't have to. His profile is as high as ever. He's in the news for filming people being booked into the Madison Street Jail and broadcasting it live on the Internet (www.crime.com includes live feed from four different cameras, a "shakedown slide show," as well as links to buy Sheriff Joe's videos and paraphernalia from the TV show *Cops*). The ACLU is arguing that this is an invasion of the inmates' privacy, that Arpaio has no right to humiliate them publicly when they haven't been convicted of anything. Arpaio's position is a familiar one: he says that the fear of being humiliated will deter people from breaking the law. As the debate goes on, Arpaio's name stays in the papers.

He doesn't even need such publicity. All he really needs are the posters and placards on the streets telling the public to reelect Sheriff Arpaio. He doesn't need his face on television or in the newspaper, because everyone knows his face already, and the mere mention of his name conjures it. There can be very few people in the city, of any social class, who don't know what he looks like. While other politicians canvass support, Joe Arpaio can sit comfortably in his office knowing that all he need do in order to ensure victory is have his name on the ballot.

Joe Arpaio has a secret, and it is this: he is a fictional character.

Of course, there is a sixty-eight-year-old man named Joe Arpaio who is beginning his third term as Maricopa County sheriff. But Joe Arpaio, America's Toughest Sheriff, doesn't exist.

The killings and beatings are real, for sure. Scott Norberg, beaten by four to six guards [illegible] with a stungun, [illegible] strapped to the restraint chair, then suffocated with a towel. James Johnson, shot dead by a deputy. Michael Sanderson, who hanged himself in custody. Jeremy Flanders, beaten into a coma by fellow inmates without supervision by guards. Annette Romo, a pregnant woman who lost her child after guards ignored her complaints of pain. Matthew Creamer, beaten so badly by two guards that there were blood blisters in his ears. Paul Van Noy, beaten and then left to lie in his own blood, piss, and shit for twenty-four hours . . . These are real. But America's Toughest Sheriff is a fiction.

The debate over Arpaio has tended to assume that he is Rudy Giuliani moved west, a groundbreaking law enforcer who makes the city safer by using methods that horrify some but are considered by others to be justified by the results. But both sides are missing the point. Arpaio has reduced neither the crime rate nor the rate of recidivism in Phoenix. He has had no discernible effect whatsoever. He serves only to con the public into thinking that something is being done about crime. Phoenix is bucking the national trend: as crime falls nationwide, it increases here. Especially violent crime. In 1992, 136 people were murdered in the city; in 1999, 214. There were more murders, rapes, and car theft in 1999 than in the previous year. Arpaio's defenders can argue that the population is increasing, so the statistics are misleading. But this is disingenuous. Most homicides—which have increased by nearly two thirds since 1992 while the population has grown only by a quarter—are not committed by opportunistic yuppies coming here to work dot-com jobs. The reality is indisputable: in Phoenix, your chance of getting killed is better since Arpaio took office.

Arpaio may be tough on inmates—to the point of allowing them to be beaten and killed on his watch—but he is not tough on crime. Like Ron Masak, who emceed his fund-raising party, he is not a real law enforcer. He is playing one. When he was a boy, he loved to read the Lone Ranger books and play at being the hero. He's still doing it. And the voters are playing along.

It's hard to blame them. In spite of all I've said, in spite of all I know about Joe Arpaio, I share one thing with the voters: I like him.

I consider it to be my biggest personal failing, my most shameful weakness of character, but there it is. I like him. I try not to like him, but the only way to accomplish that is to stay away from him. It is July 2000, and as I drive to his office to talk with him I'm bracing myself. Because I know that, after listening to him for a while, and knowing that nothing he says is true, knowing that he's a fictional character, an actor playing a part, I'll still feel like giving him my vote and joining his posse.

His office is on the nineteenth floor of the Wells Fargo Building in downtown Phoenix, a short walk from both the Bank One Ballpark and the Madison Street Jail, if it were possible to walk anywhere in this heat. A large window gives a panoramic view of the sprawling city over which he presides. He sits behind a huge desk with his name on it. He rises to greet me as his secretary escorts me in.

It's been more than a year since I saw him last, and he's changed remarkably. For most of his time in office, he was overweight and had an air of perpetual confusion. He could not remember people he'd met a few minutes previously and would often forget what he was talking about in the middle of a sentence. I once saw him at a conference of law enforcers who had assembled to discuss possible strategies for preventing children from becoming criminals. When I talked with him afterward, he didn't know what the event was about; he thought it was a charitable function to raise money for disadvantaged children and that he was the celebrity guest.

Now, as he shakes my hand, his body is trim and his eyes are focused. He asks how I'm doing, then asks after my fiancée, whom he hasn't seen in about two years. His speech is lucid. His delivery is like a comedian's caricature of an Italian American, with lapses into a John Wayne drawl.

The temperature outside is over a hundred. My face is burning and I'm drenched in sweat. The air-conditioned luxury of Arpaio's office makes the fiery vastness outside seem like a movie we're watching through the window. Arpaio laughs heartily, tells me to sit down, get comfortable.

One thing that hasn't changed: Joe

Arpaio has never met a tape recorder he didn't like. The interview was supposed to last for a half-hour. It lasts for more than two. When I switch off the machine, he continues to talk.

He tells stories of his days in Turkey. "They sent me over there all by myself, just me with a little gun . . ." He talks of gun battles with drug dealers. "I was brazen. Maybe I didn't use much sense like maybe I should have, these gun battles and how I reacted. But I survived.

"I don't carry a gun today, and I don't have bodyguards. Everybody says, 'You have to have bodyguards.' My staff get very angry because I won't have anybody follow me around. I walk the streets. If it's gonna happen, it's gonna happen. I don't worry about it."

I don't mention that Sammy the Bull often said the same thing.

"I go into the tents, I slept in the tents. Everybody said, 'They're gonna kill you.' I said, 'Nah, they're humans like anybody else, don't worry about it . . .'"

I know he's lying, know it for a fact, but I can't help it—he's getting to me. I wish he were telling the truth.

"When I'm walking around, they all come up to me. Guys come up to me, they don't look like white-shirt-type people. I think they're gonna shoot me, but they come up to me and shake my hand. They say, 'Hey, we love what you're doin'.' The working people, I'm talking about. The working people. Even people outta jail come up to me and say, 'Hey, thank you, I just got outta your jail.' It's amazing."

He's only been warming up, and now he gets in his stride. "I still have faith in the people, the people I serve . . . The mayor, the governor, nobody knows them . . . I'm the guy. It makes me angry sometimes when people go around accusing me of things, and I know I'm right. But I can't get my point across. It's very difficult . . . I won't defend myself, because I won't lower myself to their level."

I ask how much longer he plans to be sheriff.

"Well, I'm getting up there. I can't last forever. I just wish that I would have done it ten years earlier . . . I'm gonna do it again. I'm a fighter. The only reason I'm doing it again, the only reason, is that the people support me. The day the people say, 'We don't want you as sheriff,' I'm gone . . . They're my bosses. Now, when you say, 'Are you gonna do it again a fourth time, when you're seventy-two years old . . . ?' Let's see. Let's see . . . I know I could be a good governor. Jane Hull . . . is a nice lady. She and I are the only ones who supported Bush against McCain. But she's leaving. So if you're gonna ask me, are you ever gonna run for governor, I'll probably tell you . . . never say never." He grins. "But, every politician wants to be somebody else. They don't wanna stay where they're at. Nobody believes me when I keep saying I just wanna be the sheriff."

This is what makes Arpaio so compelling. He's that rare entity, a person who's content. Sitting there in his office, he knows he can do anything he wants. He knows he has no boss, knows he doesn't have to answer to anyone. He knows his own power, and, however you might feel about what he does, he's intoxicating to be around. In Arpaio's world, everything is certain.

I tell him I know that crime is rising in Phoenix. He denies it, then says the violence is caused by the drug traffic. "I'm not talking about marijuana, I'm talking about methamphetamine. I don't know how to stop the drug traffic, and I've been in it for thirty-eight years. I think if I knew, I'd be the president. I can give you what's been said fifty years ago . . . It's the same thing we're saying today—tough law enforcement, prevention, rehabilitation . . . Nothing's changed. The stuff coming across the border that we catch? Ten percent. Fifty years ago, ten percent. Today, ten percent. Nothing's changed . . . I don't know how to solve the problem. Don't ask me."

He says this so brightly, so animatedly, that at first I doubt what I'm hearing. Joe Arpaio, the man whose book is subtitled *How We Can Win the War Against Crime*, is telling me he doesn't know how to reduce it.

A moment later he's recalling how he busted Elvis Presley for speeding in Vegas.

We talk about recidivism, and he does have an answer to that: Education. Rehabilitation. He talks about one of his programs that aims to educate inmates about time. "We've graduated one thousand men and women. They go through a six-week course . . . Only eight percent came back to jail. It's usually sixty, seventy percent."

Arpaio is genuinely enthusiastic. He doesn't seem to realize I'm dumbfounded. He once told a reporter, "Hear me loud: Forget emphasizing rehabilitation, and punish the criminals!" Now he's telling me that rehabilitation is all that works. He's talking about having high schools in the jails for juvenile criminals, and about parenting programs, and about setting people up with jobs when they leave jail. The man who has become a legend, who gained his power by using cruelty as a political platform, is telling me that the philosophy that got him such power doesn't work. He's telling me that America's Toughest Sheriff doesn't exist.

A few months later his story has changed. It is election night, the results are still coming in, and Arpaio is well ahead. It is close to midnight, and he is at the Republican celebration, which is being held at the Marriott Hotel in Phoenix. There is a giant TV, and maybe three or four hundred people are waiting for it to tell them who the new president will be. Meantime, Arpaio's fans are paying homage.

One man approaches him and says, "I'm having an argument with my wife. She says it's pronounced 'shereef,' and I say it's 'sheriff.' How do you say it?"

"Say it any way you want," Arpaio tells him. "I get called a lot worse things than that. Don't argue with your wife on my account." The guy laughs, shakes hands with Arpaio, and moves on. He is immediately replaced by someone else, who asks Arpaio about the tents.

"I'm gonna get rid of the tents," Arpaio tells him. "They don't like being in the tents, okay, I'm gonna put them in toxholes and see how they like that. Maybe the tents are too good for them."

He turns to me. "Tell me something," he says. "If I did something like Jeff Groscost did, and the papers were all attacking me, do you think I'd lose the election?" He's referring to a local political scandal centered around alternative fuel that cost the politician

The Academy of American Poets
announces





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This spring, National Poetry Month will celebrate the **American Poet Stamp** series from the United States Postal Service. Visit **www.poets.org** to nominate a poet for a future stamp and sign a petition for more stamps featuring American poets. Visit the National Poetry Month website today!

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SOLUTION TO THE MARCH PUZZLE

SOLUTION TO THE APRIL PUZZLE

In an address to the Record of the Supreme Court of the United States" The author is Supreme Court Justice JOHN PAUL STEVENS.

"Although we may never know with complete certainty the identity of the winner of this year's presidential election, the identity of the loser is perfectly clear. It is the nation's confidence in the judge as an impartial guardian of the rule of law. I

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
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9	L	O	S	E	R	I	S	P	S	E	R	F	E	C	T
10	L	Y	C	L	E	A	R	I	T	T	I	S	T	H	E
11	N	A	T	I	O	N	S	C	O	N	E	F	I	D	E
12	N	C	E	I	N	T	H	E	J	U	D	V	G	E	A
13	S	A	N	I	M	P	A	R	T	I	A	L	E	G	U
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15	E	O	F	L	A	W	I	D	I	S	S	E	N	T	S

Puzzle editing by Dan Asimov. Acknowledgments to "Word Circus" (Eclectic Literary Forms) for some of the anagrams. Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

CLUES: A. r(even)ue; B. e-m(path)y; C. chat-eau; D. out-line; E. r(E)enter; F. done-[illegible]; G. [illegible]; H. tendrons; I. trill-ium; J. hoot-e'nanny (homophone); K. empt[illegible]; L. [illegible]; M. [illegible]; Y. N. power-plant (pun); O. (w)retched; P. epitaphs*; Q. majorette (pun); R. enthlade*; S. car-jacking (pun); T. O-therwise*; U. utilities*; V. rationales*; W. th(ought-full)y; X. om(mis)cien*-t; Y. fetishise*; Z. t(went)ieth*; AA. hyacinth*; BB. elasti*-city; CC. un(dign)ified; DD. Neter(t)itt*; EE. in-je(c.)t; FF. typ(h.)o-I.D.; GG. eye-teeth; HH dis-a-vowal (homophone); II. sectional*; JJ. telethon (hidden); KK. advertisements*; LL. the(or)y; MM. euthanasia (pun: "youth-in-Asia"); NN. seals-kin.

who dreamed it up the election.

No, I say, you'd probably win anyway.

He raises his fist in the air. "You're damn right I would."

The giant TV tells us that George W. Bush has won the election. People begin to cry. One man holds his baby in the air. A young woman screams and runs into her boyfriend's arms. They kiss and hug, laughing; he lifts her off her feet and swings her around. Then he lets go of her and starts to jump up and down, pumping his clenched fist in the air. Then I see that almost everyone else is doing the same thing. They begin to chant, "Bush! Bush! BUSH!" with such force that my ears will still have a faint humming sound the next day. When Al Gore appears on the screen, they sing, "Na na na na na na na, hey, hey, goodbye."

There is a raised stage, and it is mounted by Mike Minnaugh, local Republican Party chairman. He quiets the faithful, then says he wants to introduce someone. "This guy is the most well-known guy in the country," he says, and before he can say the name, the crowd is already chanting it.

"JOE! JOE! JOE!"

Arpaio ascends to the microphone, smiles, nods, waits for the cheers to die down. Then he delivers his speech.

"You know, there's something that George W. Bush said last week. He said . . . Uh . . . actually, I don't remember what he said, what the sound bite was . . . but, whatever it was he said, it was true."

The applause almost levitates the stage.

An ordinary night in Phoenix. It's one in the morning. I'm in a Circle K near Van Buren, the street that is the center of much of the city's prostitution and drug dealing. The woman behind the counter looks elderly, but she may just be middle-aged and exhausted. As I wait in line, a mumbling junkie comes in, trying to panhandle, and she tells him to get out. As I pay her for my purchases, I notice a picture of Arpaio on the wall behind the counter. The woman sees me looking at it, and she gives me a gap-toothed smile. "Yeah," she says. "We need him for governor. Damn right we do." ■

BAD SPORTS

Or: how we learned to stop worrying and love the SUV

By Paul Roberts



It's the post-lunch lull at a Ford dealership in an upscale Seattle suburb, and a half dozen customers are gawking at the Excursion, Ford's entry in the "full-size" sport utility vehicle market and, currently, the largest passenger vehicle on the planet. A low, bruised-looking sky has threatened rain all day, and the traffic noise from the nearby highway is incessant, but Ford has yet to be hit by looming recalls, and the mood on the lot is festive, even giddy. Although the Excursion has been out for more than a year, to see one up close is still like meeting a minor celebrity. The thing is surreal. Nineteen feet long and nearly seven feet high, with huge truck tires, bulging side panels, and a rounded chrome bumper and grill so oversize they look borrowed from a long-haul semi, the Excursion seems less like a passenger vehicle than some futuristic locomotive.

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Boby, my fair-haired, apple-cheeked salesman, unaware of the fact that I'm a journalist, leads me around an ivory-white model, describing how the Excursion is longer and wider and taller than any archrival, the Chevrolet Suburban, formerly the world's largest SUV. Ford's boosters back in Detroit have insisted to me that being the biggest won't do the job alone; the Excursion, the newest Ford SUV, I've been told, is a "needs-based" car, designed for real customers—"grounded, down-to-earth, self-reliant, traditionalist individuals," according to the brochure, whose chubby-cheeked target buyer is a family man transporting a small crowd and hauling five-ton horse trailers over rugged mud roads. The brochure even invokes Thoreau: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life."

These, of course, are rather hard to take with a straight face, since nearly everything about the Excursion's marketing material, including Bob's well-honed sales patter, is larded with references to the rig's great size and cargo capacity and sheer mass. Standing next to the 5,400-pound behemoth, whose V-10 engine can suck dry its forty-four-gallon tank in five hours, I'm having a hard time concentrating on even the most basic [illegible] of my deal. Bob senses my concern. Dropping his dimensional patter, he assures me that the world's largest SUV can still fit into the parking garage at Bellevue Square, the Northwest's toniest mall. "Seriously," says Bob, smiling conspiratorially. "We measured."

But the conventional wisdom that once defined automotive quality, you'd be hard-pressed to imagine a category of

vehicle less likely to succeed than the SUV. The typical SUV costs as much as a luxury car—anywhere from $19,000 for a little Kia Sportage to $82,000 for the tanklike Hummer—yet rides like a truck. It's hard to maneuver, harder to park, and possesses all the elegance and charm of a beer cooler. It's tall and bulked out, like some over-muscled gladiator, yet has less cargo space than most minivans or full-size sedans, and is harder for the family to climb into and out of. It can go off road, should the need arise, but since 89 percent of SUV owners never experience this need the vaunted off-road capability serves mainly to inflate the sticker price and drive up fuel consumption. And although billed as safer and more secure than lesser cars, SUVs were infamous, even before the Ford/Firestone debacle, for their high incidence of fatal rollovers and other deadly accidents.

Put another way, you'd expect to see SUVs relegated to the flukes and fads corner of the Museum of History and Industry, next to the Edsel or the Corvair. Instead, they are the most popular vehicles on America's streets and are getting more so, despite constant bad press and gas prices that, for a few months last summer, cost some Excursion owners $100 every time they filled up. To stroll the parking lot of any mall or high school is to find hundreds of SUVs, from the monster Excursions and Suburbans to the luxurious Navigators and Range Rovers and Lexuses to the tiny Toyota RAV4s and Mercedes ML 430s—all equipped with the four-wheel drive, big tires, and high ground clearance that off-road driving requires; and all so spotlessly clean that it's clear they've never been within thirty miles of a dirt road.

Yet the fact that sport utilities offer very little sport or utility matters little to those who buy them and not at all to those who sell them. Last year the SUV and its fraternal twin, the full-size pickup truck, accounted for roughly one third of the 17 million cars purchased in America, making the "light truck" category, to which they both belong, not only the most successful Detroit has ever rolled out but so profitable it has single-handedly dragged the American auto industry out of its decade-long recession doldrums.

Why should such a terrible car be so popular? Conservationists, who regard the SUV as a kind of industrial Antichrist, believe the "sport ute" is hot only because automakers and their parasitic allies, the oil companies, spend billions of dollars to brainwash consumers and bribe regulators not to close pollution and fuel-economy loopholes. This is sour grapes. True, these two industries have lavished money on Congress on behalf of the SUV.[1] But car companies actually spend less money advertising SUVs than they do for many other categories, such as midsize sedans. SUVs sell themselves.

Still, one can understand the critics' sheer horror. Tens of millions of Americans going into debt to buy what amounts to not only a dysfunctional, socially problematic, goofy-looking car but a very big one to boot—and this fewer than thirty years after an energy crisis and an environmental awakening were supposed to have killed our yen for gas guzzlers. Ironically, most of the people buying SUVs today learned to drive in a milieu that excoriated the big car and held up the Honda Civic as the acme of automotive elegance. How, exactly, did the SUV convince Americans big was again beautiful?

Bob fires up the Excursion and eases it out from between its brethren so I can get a better look inside. This is a "Limited" edition, designed for upscale utilitarians, and the interior is a cross between a bus and a Learjet, with a wealth of handholds and personal consoles and AC vents. Bob moves around inside with practiced grace, pointing out the various amenities: the leather seats, the leather-wrapped wheel, vanity lights, seat warmers, a six-disc CD player, and ten cup holders. He counts out the five power outlets for the refrigerators and televisions that down-to-earth, self-reliant SUV drivers cannot travel without. He demonstrates the popular "command position" front seats, which put the driver well above the road—and other cars—for an extra feeling of safety and security. Stepping back outside, Bob praises the lighted running boards, defrostable side mirrors, armored side panels, impact-absorbing hood, and special motor mounts that, in the event of a head-on collision, cause the enormous engine block to drop beneath the vehicle. "Because there's always going to be someone bigger than you out there," says Bob, grinning to show that he doesn't believe it either.

Nearby, the crowd of Excursion groupies has thinned to three. Two are fortyish, wearing the uniform of a Microsoft manager—khakis, polo shirt, and high-top urban hikers, with the pale skin and doughy midriff of someone who doesn't get outside much. The third customer is a tall, slender-waisted man with wide shoulders and an easy athletic gait. "Probably a ballplayer," says Bob, breaking from his pitch on amenities to describe the Excursion's emerging role as the status car for sports figures and other celebrities. "Last week, we had a Seattle Seahawk come in for a test drive. They're hot."

SUV mania is the kind of turnaround business miracle that makes even hardened auto executives go all misty. By the early 1980s, the story goes, American car culture was in deep crisis. All the beautiful muscle cars—the Camaros and Firebirds, the Mustangs and GTOs—had been killed off or downsized by rising gas prices, tighter pollution laws and mileage standards, and a prudish disdain for products based on images of gratuitous hypermasculinity. Their departure left a great hollow place in the American psyche. The new imported automotive icons—the Hondas and Toyotas and Subarus—may have been the picture of efficiency, but they lacked sizzle. The American car had become so wimpy and domesticated that the biggest seller was the minivan, a rolling box perfectly suited to Family Values chic but about as sexy as a grocery cart. And although the minivan suited some folks—people who, according to market research, liked family gatherings, church functions, and volunteer work—it reduced even the wildest guys and gals to "family men" and "soccer

[1] From 1992 to 1999, campaign contributions from oil and car companies totaled $56 million, and lobbying expenditures were even higher. In 1998, GM, Daimler-Chrysler, and Ford spent a total of $25 million lobbying Congress; the total for auto and oil industries combined was $90.9 million.

noms" —responsible, domesticated, nd, above all, sexually unavailable. It vas a nightmare not even Ayn Rand ould have foretold. Cars, which had nce been central to American mating ituals and sexual identity and excitement, now seemed part of a vast puritanical conspiracy to replace fun with espectability.

But out in the hinterlands, a backash against niceness was brewing. The ickup truck, long the jurisdiction of ubes and actual working people, had been steadily gaining popularity among urban and suburban cowboy wannabes. Similarly, another, less-defined category of vehicle, marked by off-road rigs such as the Chevy Blazer and the Suburban, the Ford Bronco and the Jeep Wagoneer, began to take shape. Initially, this new category appealed mainly to working types, hunters, and residents of the Snowbelt. But by the late 1980s, Detroit's marketers had begun to identify a new class of driver—a pleasure-seeking, "self-oriented" man or woman who liked to drive fast, cared deeply about a car's appearance, had an above-average fear of road dangers (including crime), and wasn't exactly eager to advertise his or her married status.

The SUV was a perfect match for this new driver. Although ugly, uncomfortable, crudely appointed, and hard to drive, the early "sport utes" projected a genteel ruggedness that appealed to the fears and frustrations of suburbanites but stopped short of the pickup's dangerous machismo. A pickup spoke of beer guts and bushy mustaches, bar fights and rebel whoops in the dark of night; the SUV emitted a more urbane vibe: here was something a nice white-collar fellow might drive to go camping or skiing or mountain climbing—without looking redneck, blue-collar, or, worse, unavailable. As one industry marketing exec put it, "We have a basic resistance in our society to admitting that we are parents and no longer able to go out and find another mate. . . . If you have a sport utility, you can have the smoked windows, put the children in the back, and pretend you're still single."

Initially, Detroit was skeptical of the SUV's prospects, fearing that anything trucklike would be hard to sell, especially to women. Chrysler still thought the future belonged to sedans and minivans, while GM was actually phasing out the Suburban. But in 1990, perhaps realizing that the baby boomers were due for their midlife crisis, Ford launched the Explorer, a sporty, updated Bronco built on the chassis of the Ford's quarter-ton pickup. The timing was perfect. Nine months later, America went to war against Iraq, kicking Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait and, in the process, moving all-terrain vehicles into prime time. In six short weeks, Operation Desert Storm not only convinced mainstream Americans that the fuel crisis was finally over—hadn't our boys just stabilized the Middle East?—but provided the best free advertisement for off-road capability since *Rat Patrol*. Night after night, we watched the Republican Guard get its collective ass kicked by real men in dune buggies, humvees, and other off-road rigs whose civilian counterparts were on display in neighborhood showrooms. By 1994—the year O. J. Simpson made the SUV the escape vehicle of choice for excessively masculine celebrities—the Explorer was the sixth-best-selling vehicle in America. Other carmakers saw the light. Between 1985 and 1999, SUVs went from 2 percent of all new car sales to nearly 20 percent, making them, in the words of one industry analyst, "the best thing that ever happened to Detroit."

Such ecstasy is hardly surprising, given the massive profit margins SUVs generate. Most vehicles are built on the unibody model; the SUV is simply a body bolted onto the frame of a pickup truck. That means SUVs are not only faster and cheaper to design and build than cars but cheaper to modify, since each "new" model is simply a restyled body bolted onto the existing chassis and engine. And because SUVs and pickups share engines, frames, and about 70 percent of other major parts, SUVs can be built in existing truck factories, on the same assembly lines, keeping costs down. As a bonus, because regulators still regard SUVs as "light trucks"—that is, low-production vehicles intended mainly for working stiffs—they remain exempt from many costly emission controls and fuel-economy re-

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quirements, and were given more time to phase in some safety requirements, such as those mandating structural protection from side-impact collisions, all of which has lowered manufacturers' costs even further.

And if that weren't sweet enough, because demand was so high, Detroit didn't have to pass along these savings to consumers. By the mid-1990s, the SUV had become among the most lucrative automotive categories in history. The profit margin on each vehicle ranged from $6,500 for a compact model like Toyota's RAV4 to $17,000 for a luxury model like the Lincoln Navigator. On average, automakers made $10,000 for each SUV sold, *ten times* the margin on a sedan or minivan, which, last year, generated a stunning $18 billion in profits for the industry. For the first time in decades, the auto industry had a genuine cash cow, and they used it to fund a huge expansion campaign. In 1999, for example, with the profits from a single year's production of Expeditions and Navigators, Ford was able to buy the Swedish company Volvo outright. (Perhaps the threat to this great river of cash can account for Ford's molasseslike response to Explorer tire defects.)

Initially, environmentalists dismissed the SUV as a fad, but, as if to mock the critics, SUVs grew in popularity as well as in sheer size. Like athletes bulking up with steroids, each year's model boasted bigger wheels, higher tops, more bulging side panels—all accentuated with plastic "cladding" and wheel "lips" that added extra inches to the vehicle's silhouette. The SUV was now a rolling fortress, an urban weapon, both defensive and offensive, for consumers traversing the battle-scarred terrain between home and work and health club. SUVs became bullies, forcing small imports to join in, just like the skinny kids who send away for Charles Atlas muscles. The once prudent Subaru Loyale became the muscle-bound lozenge-shape Outback. The Volvo station wagon, for decades the symbol of steady living, metastasized into the Cross Country. The new size meant new weight, which meant bigger engines and greater fuel consumption, but most of the upper-middle-class people who bought SUVs didn't seem to care. When they were asked to rank the top forty factors influencing their decision to buy an SUV, fuel economy came in at thirty-seven. The age of conservation was officially over.

Out on the road, big was becoming not only acceptable again but de rigueur as consumers, perhaps fearful of being crushed by their neighbors, competed to drive the biggest, tallest, most secure rig available. The Hummer, a "civilian" version of the military HMV made famous by Desert Storm and half a million survivalist morons, began appearing on side roads and culs-de-sac. Sales of the giant Chevy Suburban, once destined for the scrap heap, climbed to nearly 200,000 a year. In 1998, Ford executives, fearful of losing the upper segment of their own trend, announced plans for an even larger SUV—the Excursion. Critics and industry watchers felt the company had gone too far: no one would spend $40,000 on something they couldn't even fit in their garage. What the naysayers didn't grasp was that practicality had never played a part in the popularity of SUVs.

Bob is showing me the towing "package" at the rear of the Excursion, the hitch and cables that let this behemoth haul five tons of yacht or horse trailer or, apparently, concrete slab. I glance quickly at the other customers. The ballplayer is gone, but the two doughboys are still poking around their Excursions. I ask Bob whether customers like these have need of five tons of towing capacity, and without missing a beat Bob gives me a "need-based" spiel remarkably similar to the one offered to me by the Ford P.R. team. Then he smiles and throws me a knowing look. He has seen the truck I arrived in—an old Chevy half-ton with a towing "package"—and knows that I'm someone who understands big rigs. He rolls his eyes and lowers his voice. "You get these guys, driving up in a Honda, telling you they want an Excursion or the F-350 Superduty three-quarter-ton pickup, and you say, 'Okay, great, what are you planning on towing?' and they say, 'Tow?' and you realize they've never driven a truck or anything this big in their lives."

This farce isn't confined to towing. For years, automakers have claimed that people buy SUVs because they have a real need for extra "capability." Whereas the average car buyer gives styling or economy more priority, the SUV buyer is said to be looking mainly for more functionality—more off-road ability, more cargo capacity, more passenger safety. For these rugged individuals, the SUV isn't just transportation but a rolling tool—something to help them achieve their needs, whether that be carrying more groceries, providing their family with more safety, or getting to a more remote camping site.

This is, of course, one of the smoothest cons in modern marketing. Fewer than 11 percent of all SUV drivers go off road even once a year. In fact, SUVs do little more than the minivans and sedans they replaced, which isn't surprising, since Americans' need for more off-road capability, cargo capacity, and safety has actually declined since SUVs debuted. Today's families are smaller. Today's roads are better maintained. Crime is down. And, compared with even ten years ago, Americans today participate far less in any kind of serious outdoor activity.

But this misses the point as far as Detroit is concerned. Never mind that most SUV owners never traverse a landscape more rugged than a parking-garage ramp, or that they couldn't build a fire or use a compass to save their life. What matters is that, as one auto exec put it, "people aspire toward these activities and want to feel they have the capacity to participate, whether or not they actually do participate." Thus, nearly every facet of the SUV, from the design to the sales pitch, has been meticulously researched and refined to feed this gnawing need to feel capable. Model names imply action—Land

[illegible] Mitsubishi [illegible] Department [illegible] discretion to raise SUV and light-truck fuel [illegible] quo. In 1999, industry allies in Congress actually passed a bill preventing the department from raising SUV fuel standards. Environmentalists begged President Clinton to veto the bill and even found enough Senate [illegible] 1999, Clinton, fearful of costing Al Gore [illegible] 9:00 P.M. on a Saturday.

Rover, Pathfinder, Explorer, Mountaineer. Advertisements feature daring maneuvers through rugged terrain. Even the act of selling has been roughened up: Ford now calls its SUV dealers "outfitters," as if the SUV were a backpack or a canoe and its buyers were traveling somewhere more rough-hewn than Little League practice.

And inevitably, as the gap widens between what SUVs actually do and what they merely look capable of doing, vehicles themselves have become overt props. As much special-effects technicians as engineers, designers brazenly appropriate symbols of ruggedness and utility from the movies, cigarette and beer commercials, and even the toy industry. The result is SUVs that look less like passenger vehicles and more like the vessels from *Star Wars* or *Terminator* or *Alien*—boxy, bulging objects covered with antennas and bolts and hatches. At one point, designers at Nissan proposed releasing the Pathfinder pre-scratched and dented.

Detroit has always used our insecurities to sell us cars. For decades, we bought cars because we hoped they would make us look "fast" or "sporty" or "sexy" or "bad"—attributes we hoped would convey our talents for courting or sporting or play; in other words, leisure pursuits. If someone wanted to advertise functionality, he could drive a panel truck. In contrast, the SUV turns the form-function equation on its head. Nearly every feature is meant to look as if it plays some critical part in the vehicle's operation—despite the fact that often the opposite is true. Functionality is the aesthetic, an end in itself, and increasingly divorced from any measure of true use. Like cargo pants or deep-sea-diving watches or urban hiking boots or prewashed jeans, SUVs are simply the latest example of America's gear fetish. If the old muscle cars let working-class men momentarily escape their utterly functional lives with a roaring display of machismo, the SUV lets middle-class white suburbanites pretend to some degree of usefulness: the muscle car said, "I am macho"; the SUV says, "I am a man of action, a woman with purpose. I go places. I have real, important things to do, and, by God, I may have to drive across your lawn to do them."

Americans have always confused form and function, and one could argue that if consumers want to drive around in rolling Swiss Army knives it's really their business. The problem is, because Detroit has so brilliantly sold the SUV as a tool for performing useful tasks in extenuating circumstances, consumers willingly overlook a host of problems that would be intolerable in a mere car. For example, SUVs are famously hard to handle and park. And yet, because they are subtly perceived as "working" vehicles—like, say, delivery vans or ride-on lawn mowers—such discomfort has been written off as necessary, like the momentary displeasure of mowing the lawn. SUVs get lousy gas mileage—an average of 17 mpg—and are now so prevalent that they've actually dragged the average fuel efficiency for new cars to its lowest point since 1980, boosting American oil consumption and spurring oil lobbyists to dust off the absurd Reagan-era argument that we must immediately open places like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling crews. But concerns over fuel consumption are somehow suspended, in the same way that someone who rents a U-Haul doesn't panic over its low gas mileage.

Despite significant improvements in pollution control, a full-size SUV like the Excursion will produce during a 124,000-mile average lifetime 134 tons of carbon dioxide—nearly double the output of a midsize sedan and nearly triple that of a Honda Civic.[3] Ten years ago, such numbers would have provoked a backlash among newly environmentally guilty consumers. Yet because Detroit has so successfully exaggerated the SUV's outdoor heritage—filling ads with lush wilderness settings, using natural, crunchy-sounding names like Yukon, Forester, Sequoia, and Tundra—the SUV has been recast as environmentally benign. This brazen strategy is so effective that automakers routinely make the most absurd environmental claims with near-impunity. Ford, for example, la-

[illegible] until 2009

[illegible] *marketers have done their best to exploit. In a historical timeline celebrating the Ford Explorer's tenth birthday, for example, publicists [illegible] the World Trade Center bombing, the Branch Davidian standoff, the L.A. earthquake, the [illegible] today's threats are not only physical. Ford's publicists included such indications of moral decline as Vince Foster's suicide, the Lewinsky affair, Clinton's impeachment, and the [illegible]*

[illegible] beled the Escape hybrid "environmentally friendly" because the batteries and building materials can be recycled.

Most ironic of all is the way the SUV's phony utility promotes a delusion of safety. SUVs are assiduously marketed as safer than ordinary cars, protecting occupants from the full range of threats: bad weather, rough roads, auto collisions, even the criminal element.[4] Their great bulk, for example, is said to make them more impervious to collisions, while the "command position" seating provides better visibility in traffic.

But, in fact, SUVs have among the worst safety records of any vehicle. Whereas sedan front ends crumple during a head-on, absorbing the force of impact and sparing passengers, the SUV's rugged I-beam truck frame actually transmits more of the force back to the passengers. The larger models are notorious for their boatlike handling and slow braking—Excursions need forty more feet than most vehicles to decelerate from 60 mph to zero, and their extra height makes them more likely to tip over when turning sharp corners. (In part because many SUV drivers believe four-wheel drive means never having to slow down on snowy or slick roads, an SUV in a ditch now symbolizes the start of the ski season.) Worse, because car dealers know that hardly any SUV drivers actually go off road—intentionally, at least—they routinely underinflate the tires, a step that provides for a smoother ride but may make the vehicles even less stable turning corners. (In this, Firestone has a point.) In any case, SUV rollover accidents are up to five times as likely to be fatal than are accidents involving other vehicles, but main

ufacturers have so far refused to publicize the flip-potential ratings provided by the government.

Soon it is not the SUV occupants who suffer. A recent National Highway Traffic Safety Administration study found SUVs two and a half times as likely as other vehicles to kill the occupants of the vehicles they collide with. Many of the larger models are so high off the ground that during collisions they either ram their heavily reinforced bumpers straight into the passenger cabin of the other car or else climb up and over the other car, crushing it and its hapless occupants. The override problem is so acute that automakers are presently installing steel rail beneath SUV bumpers. In theory, such rails will push other cars out of the way, like a train cowcatcher, though this will do nothing for the *tens of millions* of SUVs already on the road.

After forty-five minutes of techrich jabber, Bob finally hands me the keys. I clamber into the command-position seat, adjust the back, and turn the ignition. The great engine roars. The electronic dashboard blinks to life. Above my head, near the rearview mirror, a digital readout flashes with the time, the compass heading, miles traveled, and, most intriguingly, the instantaneous rate of fuel consumption. Staring over an acre of hood, I ease the vehicle forward and steer toward the exit, though "lumber" is a better description. The Excursion moves like a huge flatbed truck, with mushy steering and a noticeable pause between hitting the gas and acceleration.

I turn left onto the roadway and into traffic, then straighten out, gently fishtailing from side to side as I overcorrect seven or eight times. Up ahead, the light turns red, and I step on the brakes. The Excursion slows but without much [illegible] and I am accidently rear-ended [illegible] and pool [illegible] eight-count. I am certain [illegible] won't respect [illegible]

"[illegible] through, let's [illegible] hill," says Bob. He seems unconcerned by our brush with death, aware, as he [illegible] that the Excursion's [illegible] and, above all, its sheer mass, against which all but the largest of cars and trucks must surely rebound harmlessly. As we approach the hill, I hit the gas. The great vehicle pauses for a moment, as the massive torque is transmitted through its four tons, then lunges forward. We begin to climb. The engine is maxed out. Above my head, the fuel-consumption meter indicates that we're getting 3.7 miles to the gallon. Bob smiles. "That's city driving, all stopping and starting. Wait till we get to the freeway. We'll get at least eight."

A few miles from the Microsoft campus, Bob directs me through a series of turns that put us onto the freeway. I accelerate to 60 mph and roll along in a pleasantly muffled cocoon. The ride is smooth, but there is a noticeable side-to-side sway, and every ten seconds or so we hear a staccato rat-a-tat-tat as the big tires hit the bumps on the lane markers. I look around and down, and am conscious of being several yards above the road and other cars. Traffic today is medium heavy but the other drivers reflexively give us a wide berth, and we roll along in a zone of safety, of emptiness. I relax my grip on the wheel and fiddle with the dash controls, switching on the AC and the stereo. Bob offers a steady commentary on each amenity, then points to a freeway exit. "Is that enough? Let's get off here." Above me, the fuel consumption meter reads 7.9 miles per gallon but quickly falls again to 3.7. At this rate, we'll need to stop for gas in about four hours.

The Excursion is, without question, the most ridiculous vehicle I've ever driven, a grotesque representative of the current trend that substitutes true utility and function with toylike impersonations—and which shows few signs of abating. Despite rising gas prices and the eighty-eight deaths that led to a recall of 14.4 million Firestone tires, the SUV continues to be the vehicle of choice for a huge and varied consumer group—from the teenage girls who once wanted Mustangs to the midlife-crisis males who once wanted Porsches.

And although demand has flattened somewhat for current models among traditional SUV buyers, automakers have prepared a myriad of strategies for extending the boom. To keep the novelty factor high, companies have introduced "hybrids" with abbreviated passenger cabin and a short pickup-like cargo bed in back. To snare the youth market, a herd of smaller, cheaper "compact" SUVs are being released. Automakers are also pushing existing SUVs into decidedly nontraditional markets. The luxurious Lincoln Navigator, for example, may be the SUV of choice for retired affluent whites. But ever since rapper Puff Daddy was arrested in a white Navigator, with Jennifer Lopez at his side and a gun tucked under the front seat, the $40,000 rig has become a multicultural status symbol, appealing both to upscale urban blacks and the white hip-hop wannabes who copy their every move—a marketing feedback loop that has executives in Detroit openly praising God. Granted, many traditional SUV buyers are less than titillated by the urban black thing, but automakers have found a way to exploit this anxiety as well. The prestige imports, like Mercedes and BMW, are dispensing altogether with the SUV as an outdoorsman's companion or a sporting tool and cutting straight to what focus groups tell them is at the root of a customer's buying decision: fear of the urban jungle and the carjackers who lurk in every alley. "Sometimes the greatest challenge for an SUV isn't going off road, but staying on," warns the ad for the sporty little $44,000 Mercedes ML 430. The two-page spread offers only a postage-stamp-size picture of the vehicle itself; most of the space is taken up by a grim picture of an empty freeway off-ramp at night with skid marks and a battered guardrail, and in the background a dark cityscape. The only element missing is a pack of slouching gangbangers. "Before you think about trail-blazing and bushwhacking, let's think about making it to the dry cleaners in one piece."

Actually, if *thinking* had anything to do with it, Americans would have stopped buying SUVs a long time ago—or at least last year, when the news was filled with excruciating gas prices, the Ford/Firestone fiasco, and horrific tales of SUV rollovers; when even the chairman of Ford, William Clay Ford Jr., admitted the need to address the SUV's serious pollution and safety problems. Last fall would have been the perfect moment for

merican drivers and politicians and even automakers to come to their collective senses, to be embarrassed by their obsession with bogus ruggedness, to recognize the real costs of tuning up an oversize station wagon every time they need to run down to Blockbuster.

But that moment, if it ever existed, has clearly passed. Although the Clinton Administration only weakly pressed Detroit to make smarter cars, President Bush is more likely to ensconce the SUV as our new National Rig. We're talking, after all, about a former Texas oil man whose energy secretary fought on behalf of oil and auto interests while in Congress, whose chief of staff was a lobbyist for the auto industry, and whose pick to run the Department of the Interior is already talking up the "need" to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Never mind that simply by forcing a mere 15 percent improvement in the fuel economy of SUVs and light trucks—that is, less than 3 mpg—Bush could save more oil each year than the projected annual production from the refuge. That kind of thinking is for liberals and other losers. It's time for Texas-size lifestyles.

Detroit can't wait. Despite flat sales, new market niches, and promises of cleaner, "greener" vehicles, automakers haven't abandoned the bigger-is-better formula. The Excursion is selling nicely—while Ford's conscientious young chairman has been all but muzzled by company publicists. Mitsubishi is redesigning its Montero Sport SUV with more power and interior space. Honda is planning an "apartment on wheels" SUV called the Model X. GM, hoping to steal back the "biggest SUV" moniker, is now talking about producing a bigger, six-door Suburban. And in 2002, General Motors will start building the H2, a "sport" version of the gigantic Hummer military vehicle. The H2, which made its debut last spring at the Detroit Auto Show, will be sleeker than its martial ancestor, with more modern side styling, a bigger windshield, and a broad swatch of chrome on the grill. "This is a more civilized Hummer," Clay Dean, a design manager, told reporters at the show. "But it's still capable." What, exactly, the H2 is "still capable" of, Dean never mentioned, nor did reporters ask—a polite silence that perfectly illustrates just how self-deluded the American consumer has become. Whether we're in the market for cars, clothes, or off-road running shoes, we are emotional dwarf emperors, unable to distinguish between want and need, between actual utility and simply looking the part. What else can explain the H2? Or sixdoor Suburban? Or the Toyota Tundra, a 4x4 monster whose cabin was specifically enlarged to accommodate a passenger wearing a ten-gallon cowboy hat? The Age of Reason is ended. The energy crisis is over. Get out your cowboy boots and your stonewashed jeans and prepare to party, because from now on, Midland rules. ■

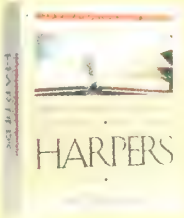
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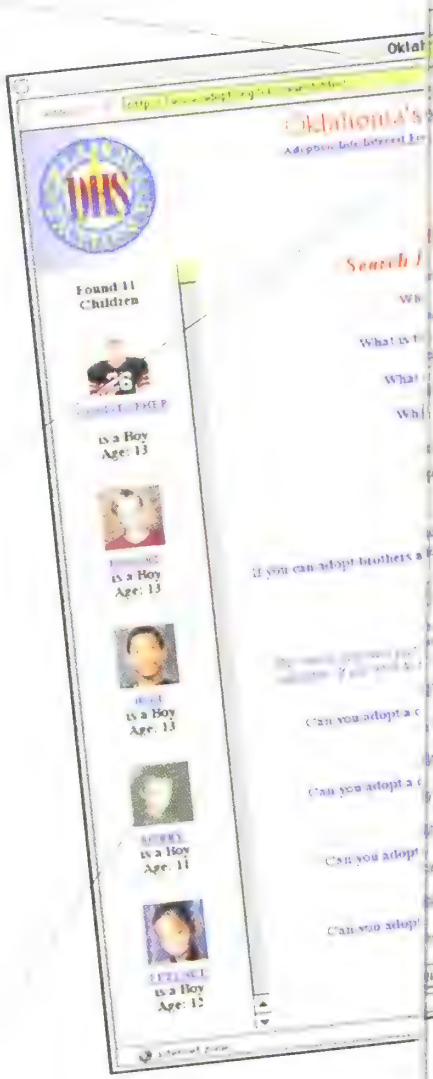
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BROKEN

Putting a happy interface on f

The robust U.S. economy of the 1990s did little to stem the tide of children removed from their families into foster homes. Since 1987 the number of children in foster care has nearly doubled, to 568,000, more than a fifth of whom have already been slated by their caseworkers for permanent adoption. To widen their search for adoptive families, state adoption agencies have built websites like this one to attract prospective parents for hard-to-place kids. Later this year the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is planning to launch its own adoption mega-site, which will gather up all the nation's available foster children into a gargantuan, searchable Virtual Orphanage that would likely scare the dickens even out of Dickens.

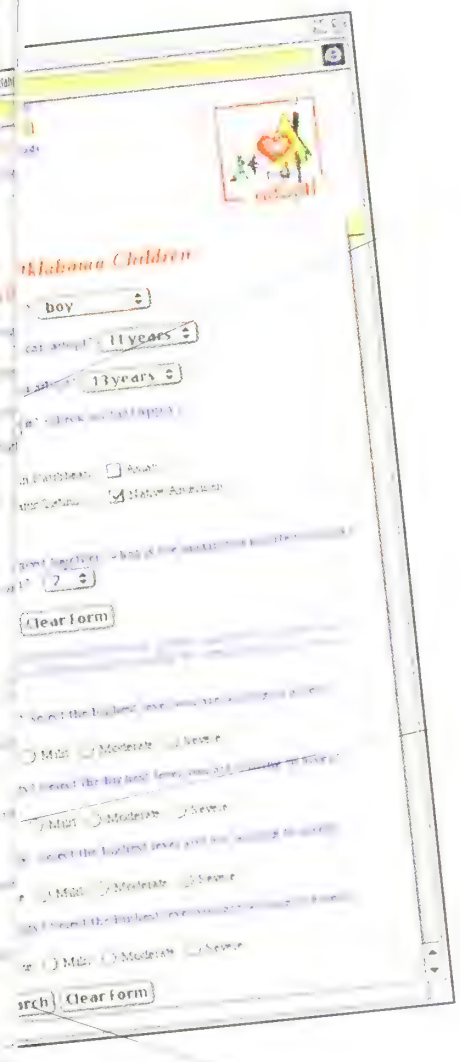


"Waiting Children" conjures images of waifs left by the sides of roads. In fact, all of these children have been "freed" for adoption after protracted court proceedings to terminate their parents' rights over them. (In many cases, birth parents fight to regain custody, but they usually lose, as few of them can afford private attorneys.) Certainly some homes are too abusive to make reunification a reasonable option, but the fact remains that less than a quarter of the nation's foster children have been removed for reasons of abuse. The rest typically are removed for "neglect"—which can include anything from literal abandonment to leaving the child unattended for a few hours, or even keeping a "filthy home." Once a child is in foster care, a new federal law designed to promote permanent placements pushes the state to sever completely ties to the birth parents within two years. In Oklahoma terminations have more than doubled since 1995, to 1,300 per year; in California they're up 159 percent; in Illinois, 315 percent.

After narrowing your search by "feature," as it were—gender, race, age, etc.—click on a child's name to see a profile. Bobby is "handsome" and "a good conversationalist," we learn, but he "worries constantly about what is going to happen to him." He and his brother were neglected by their birth parents and abandoned by their adoptive parents. Writing profiles is "a whole art in itself," says Gloria Hochman of the National Adoption Center, which trains caseworkers to write for the Internet. "You try to accentuate the positive without being dishonest." Honesty appears to dictate exposing to the world some fairly embarrassing details —for example, we learn that Desmond, nine, suffers from encopresis (i.e., lack of bowel control) and that his mother "used drugs and alcohol when she was pregnant with him"; ten-year-old Wayne, meanwhile, "tends to tattle." One hopes these profiles stay out of the hands of their grade-school classmates.

MEPAGE

adoption, *by Peggy J. Farber*



What color would you like? The friendly choice notwithstanding, it's never quite so simple. Although federal law makes it illegal for states to delay a child's adoption for reasons of race, many social workers still hesitate to approve interracial adoptions, fearing white parents will be ill-prepared for the challenges of raising non-white kids. Meanwhile, 50 percent of foster children up for adoption in the U.S. are black; 11 percent are Latino, 32 percent are white. Certainly racism plays a role in this disparity: in New York City, for example, a study from the mid-1990s showed authorities to be twice as likely to remove an abused or neglected child who was black as one who was white. But the main predictor, as ever, is poverty: families earning less than $15,000 per year are *twenty-two times* more likely to become embroiled in the child welfare system than those earning over $30,000.

If you're serious about adopting a foster child, don't check "None" here—all sixty-seven children listed so far on Oklahoma's site are deemed to have some degree of emotional disability. After years of multiple placements and neglect, many of these kids will suffer from mood swings, severe depression, or worse. What remains unsaid amid the cute photos and upbeat profiles is that some children would never be adopted if their emotional prognosis were fully laid out for adoptive families. Despite our headlong push into foster-child adoption, few if any studies have tracked how well these adoptions turn out, and some adoption advocates privately admit they fear what such research would show. "Many of these kids will wind up back in foster care, or with their parents, or on the street," says David Lansner, former counsel to the New York State legislature's committee on children and families. "To say they're being 'permanently adopted from foster care' is a fraud."

Search buttons, pull-down menus, check boxes: their pristine exactitude belies the unsettling inexactitudes inherent in our nation's foster care system. Is Bobby up for adoption simply because his mother was too poor to hire a lawyer? Is a white family an appropriate home for Terence, and even if so, will his caseworker let such a family adopt him? Is Tara so [illegible] too emotionally damaged to be placed with a permanent adoptive family? Don't worry; just point and click. Better not to contemplate what so many of these young faces represent: our government's decision, when confronted by the expensive and thorny problems of impoverished families—[illegible] lack of child care—to scoop up the kids and run. After all, it's far easier (and cheaper) to build a website than to rebuild a family.

Peggy J. Farber is a freelance writer in New York City who writes about children and families. Her work has appeared in the Los Angeles Times and on NPR's "Morning Edition."

PARIS IS BORING

Claiming France for the new homebodies

By Cristina Nehring

Paris to the Moon, by Adam Gopnik. Random House, 2000. 338 pages. $24.95.



Somerset over Hemingway, here come Mr. Rogers Or, rather, here come Mr. Gopnik, *New Yorker* correspondent and author of the world's coziest recent book on France, *Paris to the Moon*. He comes to reclaim Paris for the new homebodies, and, God knows, they are grateful. Finally, they sigh in reviews from L.A. to Boston, someone "has loosened the [tourist] trap. Hemingway held on the place [and] Stein and Fitzgerald kept Paris we can enjoy, a Paris as it surely must be."

What Gopnik has given us is a Paris as many of us clearly *want* it to be. In essays on everything from his son's swimming lessons at the Ritz to his own kitchen tours of Arpège, Gopnik has given us a new and unintimidating Paris—a place that neither challenges nor upsets us; a place we can move to with cable TV, super-babies, and prejudices intact and feel just fine. It is a Paris bled of both legend and difference—a castrated capital of befuddled salesmen and quaint customs, bourgeois dainties and wide-eyed restaurateurs waiting to learn from their avuncular American customers. You too can live here, Gopnik's essays cry: Forget all that Paris lore of love and genius, sex and starvation. Forget Hemingway selling his coat for a baguette, Henry Miller bargaining with a prostitute over a franc. Forget late-night literary debates and having to hold your drinks and wives. Paris is just a little dollhouse town these days, and you don't have to be a lover, a poet, or an alcoholic to live there. All you have to be is a snob in slippers—and with the exception of a few hurdles involving hot chocolate at the Ritz, you'll fit right in.

Did Gopnik fit in during the five years he spent on the Left Bank, from 1995 to the spring of 2000? One would expect he might have, given his "lifelong infatuation" with the city. One would be mistaken. In many ways, *The New Yorker* could not have picked a Paris correspondent less likely to immerse himself in French culture. There is not a jot in Gopnik of that generous old instinct "When in Rome do as the Romans do." When in Paris, the first thing Gopnik did was get CNN—which, there is reason to believe, became his chief source of intelligence about the city from that time forth. (On the eve of the new millennium, he even watched the Eiffel Tower sparkle on television—and never realized that it has continued to sparkle every night since . . . in real life.) The second thing he did was to order a turkey special-delivered, so that he could enjoy an American Thanksgiving. Next, he looked for a New York–style gym, raked the city for the coffee bean he had had in Soho ("Our old Dean & DeLuca blend is gone now," he laments, "and we must find a new one"), and bribed a local restaurant into providing U.S.-style takeout. (Unequipped, they brought him dinner on porcelain plates, which he forgot to return. A month later, the place went out of business. "We feel very guilty," Gopnik assures us.)

If this is a "love affair" with Paris, as some have said, it is a love affair entirely on Gopnik's terms. It is the love

Cristina Nehring is a writer living in Paris. She

than of Bluebeard with his taunting mistresses. It is the love of colonizers or the colonized. "Serve me," it says, become me, and I will idolize you."

Not that Gopnik comes off as an oppressive monster. Quite the reverse. He is genteel, self-deprecating, suave. He is also possessed, time and again, of a formidable turn of phrase. Take how he describes the way visiting chef Alice Waters eyes the watercress at a Parisian market: "not with the greed of a hungry man seeing dinner but with the admiration of William Bennett looking at a long marriage." Or how he compares the French relationship to technology with the American: "It is as if all American appliances dreamed of being cars while all French appliances dreamed of being telephones."

Such observations abound with cultural suggestion: The French, it is true, place infinitely more emphasis on sociability than Americans. No meal is consumed without animated conversation. Where Americans hide behind tinted car windows, the French connect on ubiquitous cell phones. In America, distance from one's neighbor is the ultimate commodity. French people crowd together on every occasion—the smaller and more crowded a bistro, the better. Even the solitary writer works in a café, on a table not much bigger than a Frisbee, at a proximity to smoke and gossip most American writers would find prohibitive. Gopnik does not always pursue the implications of his bons mots, but he proffers them for us to ponder. And in many cases they are, well, *bons*.

The problem is not the book's wit. Nor is it Gopnik's method, which is to present small points of his experience and try to tease larger truths from them. This was the approach, after all, of Montaigne, and it can be at least as rewarding as plowing right in with the Big Truths—more rewarding than lingering fetishistically on the details, as is the manner of many contemporary essayists. The problem lies in how fundamentally limited Gopnik is as an observer of Paris, with his cultural expectations (astonishingly parochial), habits (homebody), class (high), and identity as an overachieving yuppie dad (increasingly irksome). It is these limitations—more than his latent colonialist impulse—that mangle his attempts to interpret Parisian culture.

Let us begin with the most obvious target: Gopnik's conspicuous consumption. Now, there's nothing wrong with frequenting the most expensive restaurants in Paris if your pockets are deep enough. And it's easy to romanticize poverty—as Hemingway does in *A Moveable Feast*. A pauper can live as colorlessly as a prince—and at as complete a remove from local life. One need only recall James Joyce, as described by Malcolm Cowley, who visited Joyce's Parisian digs in 1923: "The great man lived in a cheap hotel, not picturesquely sordid, but cluttered and depressing. . . . He had no companions."

It's when your upper-class sensibility becomes so restrictive a master it no longer allows you to loiter on the street between pay-stops that it reaches the level of minor tragedy. If you can't stop to smell the pastries in the cheaper patisseries because you're being taxied to the Ritz, then you're missing the more potent charms of Paris. And this, increasingly, is the picture we get of Gopnik's years in the city. For all his drollery, his is in fact a sheltered existence in Paris—sheltered not just from the ordinary but from the truly extraordinary aspects of Parisian life.

Gopnik's take on Paris is, in many ways, an intelligent version of that offered to an in-flight magazine a few months back by supermodel Elizabeth Hurley. You *must* have breakfast at the Ritz! gushes the self-proclaimed Paris expert. In fact, you must have dinner at the Ritz too (spaghetti Bolognese: "I special-order it as soon as I arrive"). Indeed, if at all possible, you must *stay* at the Ritz. The pool is "magnificent," too, wouldn't you know.

Without scaling the same heights of uselessness, Gopnik does spend an extraordinary amount of time talking about the many things he did at the Ritz (frequent its health club, snack, subscribe to that magnificent pool, and buy drinks—especially for his kid's friends from "baby gym"). When not at the Ritz, Gopnik can be found debating the distinctions between the once and now most fashionable cafés in Paris (the Deux Magots and the Flore, respectively), dining at the best restaurants (which he disparages: French cuisine isn't what it used to be), and enlisting one celebrity chef to cook for another at a palatial apartment on the Île St.-Louis (Gopnik, I suspect, has been to the Ritz the loo more, or at least, appears to have eaten more). It is in this quarter of his habitat—look in Paris. Such vibrant areas as the Marais (which many say represents what St. Germain used to be before it was invaded and corrupt politicians took it over) are entirely unmentioned—in fact, attractive areas, indeed, almost all of Paris's twenty arrondissements.

Even the modes of public transport used by Parisians (almost without exception) remain mysterious to Gopnik. Summer and fall cede to winter. Gopnik hires nannies, hunts down engravings, and has cable TV installed. All this before, one fine day, he decides to take the metro to the Cliganncourt antique market—and marvels, a little bizarrely, at the pretty names of his local stations. Orléans-Cliganncourt is, after all, the line that serves his exclusive neighborhood, not to mention that it's the busiest line in the city. He reminds one of Marie Antoinette poking her head out of her palace for the first time and exclaiming at all the colorful people in front of the Bastille. (Not coincidentally, Gopnik hails a taxi on his way back. Pretty names or no, it was just too cold for a second trip on that metro.)

What does Gopnik miss as a result of his aristocratic tourism, other than a vocabulary of metro stops? Sadly, he misses what it's best about Paris: the street life, the *rive gauche* stamping-ground cafés, reeking *fromageries*, doggy bistros, and shockingly lovely views that open at so many crooked turns; he misses the barroom brawls, the idiosyncratic boutiques (often open only one day a week), and the honesty of Parisians not in the routine of snubbing tourists. "That's going to make you fat!" explodes the *vendeuse* at my favorite bakery as I retrieve my daily walnut tart. In California, she'd be fired—and I'd return my tart. In Paris, neither crosses anybody's mind. "You smile too much," a chef tells me on the Rue Montmartre. "Too American. Cut it out." Gopnik moves in a country of compliment, a Disneyland of tourist-driven agreeability. "Ah, you mean you wish to [subscribe] for an infinite number of visits," asks the incredulous staff at his gym, which allows only one vis-

it's loved. Why, of course, *monsieur*. And this in a country where the customer, notoriously, is not king.

Not that this servility satisfies Gopnik. The food, for instance, bothers him; it is not innovative enough. At this point in culinary history, French cuisine should be more, well, multicultural. Like all good things in right-minded America. The irony of this criticism—it's once in the pieties of his own social stratum—escapes him. He would have the French more influenced by their Asian cousins and Arab *confrères*. Of course they *are*, in a hundred ways, and Parisian streets teem with the food of these countries. What the French have not done as vigorously as Gopnik would find appropriate is *mix* their cuisines: they have not learned how to accommodate curry to, say, their *canard à l'orange*. Thus, on the one hand, he repeatedly decries "globalization"—the disappearance of regional difference in Europe—but on the other he militates against the preservation of uniqueness.

But the point about Gopnik and French food is this: in some ways he is looking for the best of it—certainly the most innovative of it—in all the wrong places. High-class restaurants are going the way of high-class hotels. With a few exceptions, they increasingly resemble one another across national lines. A five-star restaurant in Paris isn't all that different from a five-star restaurant in London (with which Gopnik unflatteringly compares it), which isn't all *that* different from one in New York. But walk down the *street* in Paris, and you see some drastic differences. In L.A. you have mini-malls with a 7-Eleven next to the nail salon—or, if you're lucky, a Thai takeout. In Paris you have—toppling over one another—the most multifarious stacks of red, blue, and yellow cheeses; of smoked, cured, creamed, marinated, sliced, or jellied meats; of breads in every shape, texture, and size.

The problem with writing about French cuisine, whether you get it or not, is that you risk turning France not merely into a theme park but into the food court within a theme park. From Peter Mayle's best-selling *A Year in Provence* to Mort [illegible] *Chum*, highly enjoyable [illegible] *in London*, Anglo books about France look more and more like love letters to the French kitchen. No other room in the Gallic household has gleaned such homage; none, one fears, even gets a second glance. Yet the French forte is not just *l'art de table*; it is, for lack of a more precise phrase, *l'art de vivre*.

The French know how to take their time. With their per capita GNP among the world's highest, they take two or three hours off for lunch a day. Parisians bring a ceremony to everyday life that is counterintuitive to many other peoples. They take pains, as Gopnik points out, to construct a perfect paper parcel around the smallest pastry—in full awareness that it will be shredded instantly by a hungry child. The moment matters in Paris. Parisians do not look primarily to the future—to their unborn progeny's college education, the next day at work, the possibility of lung cancer; they enjoy that cigarette, that double espresso. They dress fashionably and flirt fearlessly. Americans, finally, tremble before the majority of pleasures—sex evokes sexual harassment, food suggests fat, love threatens betrayal ("I'm afraid of being hurt," is almost untranslatable into French)—but Parisians embrace them without visibly greater damage to body or soul than the rest of us sustain.

Perhaps for this reason Paris has always been a magnet for artists. It is a land of beauty. Maybe a land of too much beauty. For what draws the artist is not always the same as what makes the artist. Paris has hosted more geniuses than it has produced. Picasso, Modigliani, Chagall, Dali, Hemingway, Stein, Fitzgerald, Joyce, Pound, came here; they weren't born here. And at least while they lingered, they rarely met their peer among the French. Life, perhaps, is a jealous god. If, from earliest childhood, you have pledged to it your inventiveness, imagination, and perfectionism—if, as Milton would say, "you yourself are your poem"—you may have less incentive than the next guy to write another poem. "I have," said Oscar Wilde at one point, "put all my genius into my life. To art I have given only my talent." This sentiment is quoted with regularity only in France, where Wilde's reputation rides far higher than in England or America.

France, as Gopnik points out in the introduction to Peter Turnley's evocative new book of photos, *Parisians* (Abbeville, 2000), is a country where you look forward to a civilized, *deeply felt* adult life. "Paris is a place," Gopnik writes with slight indignation, "where the forty-five-year-olds are having all the fun. . . . I see the same look on the face of a forty-year-old Parisian having a two-hour lunch on the rue de Sèvres that I see in New York only on the face of an eighteen-year-old . . ." For all his cosmopolitanism, he instinctively feels—in what he rightly identifies as American fashion—that the world belongs to kids. "There are very few Americans not haunted by youth," he writes. "It explains a sight so ludicrous to Parisians: middle-age Americans strolling in the city in sneakers and shorts. . . ."

But if Gopnik shuns sneakers and shorts, he manifests his country's youth-haunted culture in more problematic ways: he defers his entire experience in Paris to his three-year-old. When he considers what he likes about Paris, he finds, to his own surprise, that he considers only what his child likes. When he defends Paris against charges of being too old, too fraught with history, he defends it only in the name of his son: "Luke," he says, "is young in Paris right now."

What about Gopnik? At forty-two, is he really so insensible that he can perceive the seductions of Paris only through his toddler? "No story of Paris would be complete without a love story," declares a reviewer. But in the city of romance, Gopnik finds no other specimen than Luke's fleeting fancy for a girl from baby gym, which he follows in all but embarrassing detail and encourages, somewhat painfully, with fortunes spent at the Ritz restaurant (when his wife gets the bill, she thinks he is having an affair), and the end of which he bewails with far greater pathos than Luke. Cute? Maybe. But in the least French way possible. The French, as Gopnik himself remarks in an interview with a Canadian newspaper, do not indulge their children *à l'américaine*. More importantly, they do not live vicariously through them. They do not see themselves as failed teenagers, guilty servants of their valuable offspring. Half of Gopnik's book is

devoted to recounting Lulu's movements, and at the beginning this is sheerly charming, by the end it is mildly grating. It is the more grating when one sees that it comes at the expense of insight into adult life in Paris.

"The French," Gopnik claims, "romanticize only politics." About "private life," they are "disillusioned." He says this, one can only suppose, because they have a laxer view of "family values" than most Americans. They admit a larger spectrum of romantic behaviors in good part because they value these behaviors too much to caricature or circumscribe them. Gopnik thinks Parisians cynics because his own brand of idealism does not resonate with them. He overlooks the fact that they are in love with love in all its manifestations—as flirtation, courtliness, adultery, family loyalty; in jokes, in advertisements, in public displays of affection, and in secret liaisons. The moment it's love—no matter how carnal, ethereal, or doomed—the French adore and, in good measure, accept it. Where Americans are more inclined to hide their loves (public displays of affection are eschewed) and showcase their competitions (public debate is prized)—where, one might say, they put their light under a bushel and their chamber pot on the podium—the French do the reverse. Couples fall into each other's arms over cafe counters and under bridges, in youth and in age. When the flower boy comes by with two armfuls of twenty-franc roses, an ardent Frenchman will ask how much for *le tout*. Romance, in Paris, is still a religion.

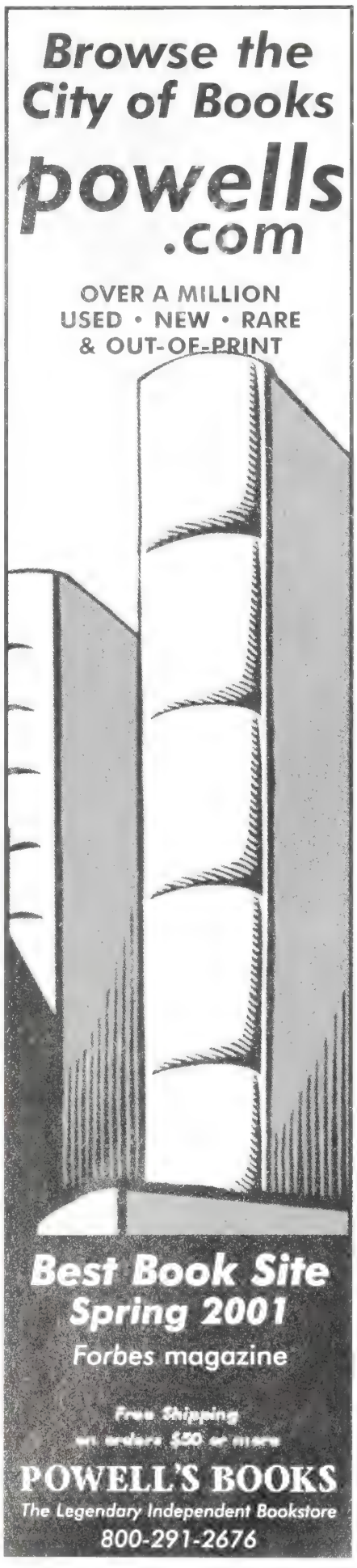
When Gopnik looks at Paris, he sees the shrunken figure of his own homebody hopes, his own commodified realities. He sees a bourgeois amusement park, a perky little country studying to be the United States, and aiming, a little clumsily, to replicate its gyms and service philosophy. Earlier writers went to Paris to find something different from home, but Gopnik seems to have gone there in search of the same old thing, with a few flaws, of course—to show that the U.S.A. is still ahead—and a few compensatory graces to make it all worthwhile. Hemingway's Paris was hardly perfect—nor was it necessarily more real than Gopnik's, for all its grating—but what it had (and what Miller's and Fitzgerald's and Stein's had, too) was an element of mystery, a recognition of difference, a feeling of possibility.

"You must change your life," goes the last line of a Rilke poem. Once upon a time, that was part of the reason people traveled—to welcome the unknown and wrestle transformation from it. Today this sort of traveler is rare. We travel abroad to enjoy what is quaint and to change—or avoid—what is challenging. Wrapped in a robe of dollars and dogmas, we keep the world from our skin.

Gopnik's book says more about the qualities of our contemporary dreams than it does about anything else. Our dreams, the dreams of a generation of educated Americans, have become small and sober. We no longer need so much as a glass of wine to believe in them: they are all about things and services; creature comforts, not ecstasy; stability, not genius, not romance, not adventure.

"He who would carry out the pearls of Arabia must carry in the pearls of Arabia." For those with the dream of love and genius, Paris is still, again, and ever-afresh, the city that fosters and feeds them. Yes, it has its share of bores and boors. But had Gopnik looked, he would have seen that the store that slept, fed, and helped Anglo writers from Joyce to Miller sleeps them still. Nothing is past. Write a poem, go to Shakespeare and Company, ask Walt Whitman's grandson for a bed, and he'll give you one between his stacks—a view of Notre Dame included. Make yourself known in your local bistro as a screenwriter waiting for a break, and chances are the owner will start a tab for you—to be paid next month, or year, when that break comes through.

Did Gopnik look at the book of Turnley photos for which he wrote an introduction? It's all still there, if you're looking for it—the couples on the *quais*, the mystery, the possibility of a Rilkean moment of change. But you can't find any of that on CNN. On television, the Eiffel Tower sparkled once and went dark. In real life, it sparkles every night, and always—from year to year—in a different color. As I look at it now, it is blue. ■



OUT OF PRINT

Publishing's future, seen from the inside

By Michael Korda

The Business of Books, by André Schiffrin. Verso, 2000. 181 pages. $23.
Book Business, by Jason Epstein. Norton, 2001. 188 pages. $21.95.



Hardly any business has a longer, deeper tradition of pessimism than book publishing. Ask any publisher how the business is doing and he (or she) will invariably sigh, look down sadly at a plate of Maryland crab cakes at The Four Seasons Grill Room, and tell you that it can't go on like this—people aren't reading books anymore; the trade is dominated by big bookseller chains and price clubs that don't know how to sell anything but the top ten bestsellers, if that . . .

Of course, it has always suited publishers to bemoan their fate. They are trained from the beginning of their careers to follow a strict regimen of poor mouthing, whining, and cries for mercy as the prelude to any negotiation with an author's agent, so much so that they come to believe it themselves. This must be taken into account when considering two new books about the business—one by the distinguished Random House editor and *enfant terrible* Jason Epstein, and one by his scarcely less distinguished former Random House colleague André Schiffrin, who ran Pantheon for many years.

A word here about these gentlemen seems in order, since I not only am the author of a book about publishing myself (one published, as it happens, by Random House) but have been for many years an editor at the rival house of Simon & Schuster. Book publishing is a small world, and those of us who have been in it for a while (in my case, forty-three years) know most of the other players. Both Schiffrin and Epstein are intellectuals, men of a high degree of culture, intelligence, education, and sophistication, as well as charming, opinionated luncheon companions in a business where lunch matters. But although they both worked for many years at Random House (Pantheon was bought by Random House back in the days when Bennett Cerf and Donald Klopfer were still running it), they are very different people.

Epstein is the better known of the two, in part because he is something of a legend in the business—people who have worked at Random House or, like myself, have had him as their editor, cherish and dine out on Jason Epstein stories—and in part because he is one of the few people in book publishing to have launched successful businesses of his own. The Reader's Catalog, a 2,000-page listing of more than 40,000 titles that could be ordered by phone using an 800 number, was one such venture—the pre-electronic precursor to Amazon.com—and *The New York Review of Books*, which he played a significant role in founding, is another. Interestingly enough, both of these were clever and profitable ways around some of the more traditional bottlenecks of book publishing, the former an attempt to break through the reluctance of the big bookstore chains to carry a full stock of "serious" books, the latter an effort to compensate for the lack of book reviews during a protracted newspaper strike.

Both Epstein and Schiffrin played roles (Epstein a major one) in the creation of the "trade paperback" business, by which Penguin Books, Sir Allen Lane's brilliant invention, was brought to the United States with such success that for a while it looked as if it might be the answer to all the problems of the book business, not to speak of quite a few of the problems of our higher-education system.

Schiffrin is the more European of the two men—his father was a publisher-intellectual who helped found Pantheon in New York after he fled, with his family, from the Nazis in France—and, in a somewhat old-fashioned and serious way, Schiffrin re-

Michael Korda is a senior editor at Simon & Schuster and the author, most recently, of [illegible].

...nist man of the left, ... "progressive" is the word to use up the ...s when that matters, but ... nes meant as praise. As a young man, ...stein was also a man of the left. Be...g American, he moved more to the ...ght as he grew older and rose up the ...rporate ladder. He was always more ...ease with the wealthy and powerful ...an Schiffrin, and much more adept ...corporate politics, ... Schiffrin either felt was beneath him or ...mply never learned to play ... ...ects both, after reading his book.

Schiffrin's *The Business of Books* is at once a lament for what he sees as a lost era and a fiercely partisan defense of his own career, written with a combination of melodrama and anger. Much of the book has to do with the events that led to his departure from Pantheon, which followed a nasty and very public spat, and about the subsequent shrinking of Pantheon's list and independent identity. It's hard to read this part of the book without feeling that someone a little more adept politically and a tad sharper at corporate politics (perhaps someone like Jason Epstein) might have had better luck preserving Pantheon than Schiffrin did.

It never seems to have occurred to Schiffrin that staying on the good side of S. I. Newhouse, then owner of Random House, and Alberto Vitale, then CEO—whatever he may have thought of those two worthies—was his first and most important task. Throughout the book, one has the sense that Schiffrin feels Newhouse ought to have been proud and happy simply to own Pantheon and to allow the Pantheon editors to publish the kind of first-rate books that those at Pantheon felt Random House itself wasn't capable of doing—a *de haut en bas* attitude fairly guaranteed to put up the backs of Newhouse and Vitale. ... Schiffrin's colleagues at Knopf and Random House and Knopf. At one point Schiffrin talked ... and ... and is the simple fact that Pantheon was owned by S. I. Newhouse, not by Schiffrin or Pantheon's editors, and that Newhouse could become thoroughly disinterested with it, from one year to the next, turning it into a whole different kind of imprint, and that's the end of it. That's what happens when the owner of a publishing house, distinguished or not, ...

The owners of book publishing houses on both sides of the Atlantic were ... the ... of ... result was a scramble for "consolidation," at the expense of diversity, that ... Many people in publishing expect that ... groups within the very near future. Many people in publishing expect that ... truly ... entities that now have a major stake in ... Schiffrin ... book publishing by which he means primarily major and important works of history, ideas, and sociology ... a less hospitable atmosphere for "difficult" or controversial books than did ... the parent companies of book publishing ... of sponsoring revolutionary ideas or taking artistic risks, and at least one or two of them got into book publishing more or less by accident, as a result of ... quently ... and at least ... popping his head into the offices of his editors, reading aloud from a manuscript ... At neither house was there any diffidence over the need to make a profit, nor any great desire to run head on into controversy just for the hell of it, ... famously open to persuasion and

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ideas, however unpopular. Above all, they liked books. That is not to say that they were bookworms, let alone intellectuals, but they thought books were a good thing, enjoyed living surrounded by them, and read a lot of [illegible] other people published.

[illegible] Ben & Jerry's ice cream caught on was that it was made by two guys who liked eating it. In the case of the book-publishing [illegible] where it was always hard to make a lot of money by big-time American corporate standards, loving [illegible] publishing them or more what made it all worthwhile. Why own a book-publishing company, you might say, if not because you look forward to doing something that doesn't give you a distinct, tactile thrill, and if you aren't dying to go home, put your feet up, and read it? But most book-publishing companies are now [illegible] people to whom neither of these ideas [illegible] and who would not necessarily be moved or persuaded by somebody who did feel that way.

There is a further problem, which both of the books under consider. Forget for a moment the fact that the book industry today is run by [illegible] people who all of whom would be [illegible] Andre Schiffrin to be deeply committed to the idea of the printed [illegible] whether the book as we know it has a future.

[illegible] Epstein addresses himself in *Book Business*, which is at once a thoughtful, witty, and surprisingly affectionate memoir of a life spent (one would judge, well spent) in book publishing; a provocative, far-reaching analysis of [illegible] is in now; and a look at the ways in which salvation may be had.

Epstein contends that the book business is suffering, in large part, from [illegible] He argues, he writes, "deviated from its true nature by assuming, under duress from unfavorable market conditions and the misconceptions of remote managers, the posture of a conventional business." He argues that book publishing is, in fact, not "a conventional business" at all and that the decision on the part of book publishers to transform themselves into ordinary businessmen, or, when that failed, to sell their companies to media conglomerates, has led to a desperate search for steady, predictable profits that were never there in the first place. As a result, the problem is no longer just the question of whether anybody is going to publish experimental first novels, collections of essays, or works of contemporary European literature—in short, all the things that publishers tried hard to discourage editors from doing even in the days when Alfred and Blanche Knopf were still alive. Rather, the problem is the increasing fear that the book itself may be doomed, a technological dead end, the vermiform appendix of the communications system.

The fact that this might indeed turn out to be the case no doubt lurks at the backs of the minds of many of those who now own, whether they intended to or not, several billion dollars' worth of book-publishing companies (not to speak of those who work in those companies), and it forms another part of the background against which these two books ought to be read. Both Schiffrin and Epstein end on a note of [illegible] Epstein more convincingly. But the prevailing tenor of their books is not such as to encourage a bright young person about to graduate from college to start looking for a job in publishing. Schiffrin hopefully, [illegible] the prospects, advocates a kind of "third way," consisting of small, specialized publishing houses with high ideals and standards, like his own New Press, perhaps [illegible] presses. Epstein, on the other hand, stakes the future on high technology, [illegible] the Internet and the world-wide book marketplace, with the book itself being printed out at your command, either at your nearest Kinko's or at compliant bookstores or even, [illegible] which publishers are rushing to launch and which Stephen King has already taken on a partially successful solo flight.

Since the small-press model that Schiffrin espouses has been tried repeatedly before—Grove Press, New Directions, even Pantheon itself, were all examples—it can hardly be called a revolutionary idea. Epstein's brave new world, on the other hand, makes book publishers nervous in precisely the way and for many of the same reasons that the big music companies are nervous about billions of people downloading their music for nothing over the Internet. "Why pay when they're giving it away?" does not a business plan make.

It will be instantly apparent that some measure of this pessimism about the fate of the traditional book is unjustified. In the late 1940s, as more and more people bought television sets, the demise of the motion-picture industry was widely predicted: people, it was believed, would stay home and watch TV instead. And for a while they did, but eventually they started going back to the movies, and soon afterward the invention of cable television and the VCR brought a whole new dimension to the movie business. The same, no doubt, will be true of books. The fact that people may choose to download a book and read it on a screen, or print it out at home, may actually expand the readership of books, as opposed to bringing about its extinction.

Epstein sees more clearly than most the awesome potential of "electronic publishing." It may be, for example, that Mary Higgins Clark's readers, or Tom Clancy's, will still want to buy conventional books for many years to come, but the whole business of scholarly publishing, and, for that matter, of publishing first novels, poetry, and essays, may be moved away from the printed book and take place electronically. After all, book publishers (and bookstores) have always been reluctant to devote time and money to books that sold, almost by definition, in very small quantities, and in the world of big corporate publishing and big bookstore chains they are more reluctant still. Those who want such things will be able to cruise the Net for them, download what they want, and print it out, in some form or other—which may mean, by the way, that authors of difficult first novels will no longer go unpublished and unread because no publisher wants their books. They can self-publish on the Internet or cluster together on Internet sites (Sensitive

rstnovel.com, perhaps), where the rowser can sample a chapter or two, ead about the author, and, if he or she kes, download the rest of the text.

Of course, every novelist will aspire o have his or her work in conven- onal book form eventually, but in he meantime the work will be avail- ble and read, and by publishers and gents as well, one suspects, since that's here the new talent will be found. he "slush pile" will also move to the Veb—perhaps not a gain, except in erms of saving paper and trees, but it s hard to deny that a whole new world ff publishing is going to be out there n cyberspace more quickly than most of us realize, and that it may be where he new, interesting work will first ap- ear. I see the young editor of the fu- ure as somebody crouched over a lap- op, surfing the Web for fresh new alent, rather than somebody in a blue lazer taking agents to lunch.

Schiffrin's book looks backward, with a certain bitterness, toward a publishing world that was al- eady becoming old-fashioned in the days when Cerf bought Pantheon, a usiness that still saw itself as part of "a common enterprise of shared cultural and political value." Epstein, on the other hand, looks forward, albeit with a degree of alarm, toward an unimag- nably different and more expansive uture in which the printed word will be communicated without the con- ventional publisher and bookseller as middlemen. Naturally, this vision must be taken with a grain of salt. Books will still need to be edited, designed, and marketed, though possibly in new ways. Technology may spell the elim- nation of the sharp pencil as an edit- ng tool, but there is nothing magical about a sharp pencil—it is not a wand. That almost every step in the book- publishing process could be made more efficient is in any case self-evident to anybody who works in the business, or to anyone who has ever written a book. Until a few years ago, most of it would have seemed familiar to Gutenberg.

Regardless of whether or not its san- guine predictions hold up, Epstein's *Book Business* is full of the touches of keen observation and a sharp sense of ridicule that have made its author a prized guest for so many years. Those who want to know what the book-pul- lishing business used to be like owe it to themselves to read his book, if only for his loving description of Random House in the old days when it shared the Villard mansion on Madison Av- enue with Cardinal Spellman and the Archdiocese of New York, fighting a stealthy war with the monsignors of the Archdiocese over the number of parking places allotted to Random House editors in the courtyard. There are wonderful vignettes: of Auden ar- riving at Random House in carpet slip- pers; of Sunday lunch at the Knopfs' house in Purchase, New York, followed by home movies of Thomas Mann; of dinner at Bennett Cerf's house in Mount Kisco, "where at the pool maids and waiters in white coats served dou- ble-thick lamb chops . . . accompanied by little porcelain pots of ketchup."

Epstein re-creates those days vivid- ly, and one can't help feeling that he, at least, got just about as much fun as he could out of his long career at the center of the book business. He also sums up a thoughtful and plausible happy outcome for the crisis of book pub- lishing, in which it will, thanks to the computer and the Internet, revert to the "cottage industry" it once was, in which tomorrow's bookstores will be "tangible, intimate and local . . . [places] where the book one wants can always be found and surprises and temptations spring from every shelf," and in which the book will be saved at the last minute, as in *The Perils of Pauline*, by technologies that are emerging "just as the publishing industry has fallen into terminal decrepitude."

I like to think that this—or some- thing like it—is going to happen. In- deed, I am almost convinced that it will, for whereas the book itself is a worthy and interesting object, much more convenient to read and store than was the clay tablet or the scroll, the point has always been the ideas, the entertainment, the thought, or the cul- ture that it contained. All of that, I think, is at the dawn of a new age. In the meantime, people who love tradi- tional books are urged to read both of these, as they present a convincing pic- ture of how we got into the mess we're in, and, in the case of *Book Business*, how we just might get out of it, and on to bigger and better things. ■

WHAT DO THE WINNERS OF

- The Pulitzer Prize
- The National Book Award
- The PEN/Faulkner Award
- The PEN/Hemingway Award
- The New Yorker Prize for Best First Book
- A Golden Globe and an Oscar

HAVE IN COMMON?



AGNI
MAGAZINE

CURLY RED

By Joyce Carol Oates



I was Daddy's favorite of his seven kids, but still he sent me into exile when I was thirteen and refused to speak to me for twenty-seven years, nor would he allow me to return to our house on Crescent Avenue, Perrysburg, New York, even when Grandma died (though he couldn't keep me away from the funeral mass at St. Stephen's and afterward the burial in the church cemetery, where I stood at a distance, crying) when I was twenty-two. Only in the final months of his life, when Daddy was weakened with emphysema and the anger leaked from him, was I allowed to return to help Mom sometimes. Because now Mom needed me. But it was never the same between us. Daddy was only seventy-three when he died, but he looked much older, ravaged. Always he'd driven himself hard, working (plumber, pipe fitter), drinking heavily, smoking, raging. He'd been involved all his working life with union politics. Feuds with employers, and with other union members and organizers. Every election, Daddy was in a fever for weeks. One of those men involved behind the scenes. "Delivering the Perrysburg labor vote." A hard-muscled man with a roostery air of self-esteem, yet edgy, suspicious. Daddy was a local character, a known person. He'd been an amateur boxer, light heavyweight, in the U.S. Army (1950–52), and worked out at a downtown gym, had a punching bag and a heavy bag in the garage, sparred with my brothers, who could never, swift on their feet as they were, stay out of reach of his "dynamite" right cross. When I was living with relatives across town, in what I call my exile, I knew my father at a distance: caught glimpses of him on the street, saw his picture in the paper. Then things changed, younger men were coming up in the union, Daddy and his friends lost power, Daddy got sick, and one sickness led to another. By the time I was allowed back in the house on Crescent Avenue, Daddy was under hospice care, and he'd turned into an old man, shrunken by fifty pounds, furrows in his face like you'd make in a piecrust with a fork. I stared and stared. Was this my father? That face I knew to be ruddy-skinned, good-looking, now gaunt and strangely collapsed about the mouth. Even his shrewd eyes were smaller and shifting worriedly in their sockets as if he was thinking, *Is it in the room with me yet?*

John Dellamora, who'd always been contemptuous of weakness in others and in himself now dependent upon breathing oxygen through a nose piece. Watching me sidelong as I approached his bed bearing a bouquet of white carnations in my trembling hand.

"Daddy? It's Lili Rose . . ."

When the hospice nurse took me aside and said, If there's some bitterness between you and your father now's the time to make it up, later will be too late, I said right away, "That's up to my father, I think." Everything was up to him. Goddamn if I'd say I was sorry when I was not sorry.

I think Daddy knows me. Sometimes. Still he stiffens as if he's afraid

ight touch him, and moves his head
a tight little nod when I speak to
m, though I can feel him staring at
e, at my back, when I leave the room,
nd always I'm thinking he's going to
all me back in his old teasing voice—
ey *Curly Red, c'mon! Let's make it up*
Curly Red. That name I haven't
eard from anyone's lips in twenty-
ven years.

I'm waiting. I'm certain that hour will come

We were Mariana, and Rick, and mily, and Leo, and Mario, and John-y Jr., and Lili Rose. Daddy would stare us in disgust, picking at his teeth ith a silver toothpick. "Christ! Looks ke a platoon." He was proud of us nd loved us, though. Most of the time.

We lived in a large wood-frame ouse Daddy made sure was always ainted and in good repair, front and ack lawns mowed, sidewalk shoveled n winter. There was a tall red maple n front that turned fiery and splendid h October. Our house was at the dead nd of Crescent Avenue, above the Niagara River. It was a steep dizzy drop o the riverbank. Cliffs on both sides were exposed shale that always looked vet, sharp. Beyond the dead end was no-man's-land of scrub trees and this-les and sumac that flamed up in ear-ly autumn, where young kids played. It vas a dangerous playing area, if you ost your footing. The view of the riv-r from our house was beautiful, I guess A river you see every day, from the vindow of your own room, you take for granted until one day it's gone from ou. I cried a lot when I was sent away.

But the river got into my dreams. Wide, and glittery like fish scales, al-ways choppy like a living thing rest-ess beneath its skin. Miles away the hunderous Falls like nightmare. Al-ways there was a wind, and in winter he air could freeze your eyelashes ogether in a few seconds. There was hat morning in December you'd wake to see the river had frozen, urned to black ice

I had a happy childhood in that house. Nobody can take that from me.

This clipping from the *Perrysburg Journal* I saved until it was so dry it fell to pieces in my fingers. An obitu-ary beneath a two-inch-high photo of a shyly smiling black boy with a gap between two prominent front teeth

> Jadro Filer, 17, Resident of Bryan Street, Perrysburg. Varsity Football at Perrysburg High School. Choir, Bible Baptist Church. Died in Perrysburg General Hospital, April 11, 1973, of severe head injuries following an attack early in the morning of April 9 by yet unidentified assailants as he was walking on Route 11. Survived by his mother, Ethel; his sisters Louise and Ida, and his brothers, Tyrone, Medrick, and Herman. Services Monday at Bible Baptist Church.

Always people would ask if I'd known Jadro Filer. No! Or any of his family. It was only after his death I came to know him. It was only after his death we came to be associated in some people's minds. *Jadro Filer, Lili Rose Dellamora.*

Not that it did any good for Jadro Filer, who was dead. And it was the worst thing that could have happened to me.

When we were growing up my brothers were often in some kind of "trouble." I had four older brothers. All except Johnny Jr., the closest to me in age, had quick tempers. It's serious trouble I'm speaking of here. That time Leo and Mario got into their first "serious trouble" I was ten, and never knew what happened exactly. Nobody would tell me much. Mom kept saying, scolding, "Never mind!" The girl, Liza Deaver, was fifteen, with thick glasses, a splotched turtle face, a slow whiny insinuating manner of speech. She was as fattish and mature as a grown woman, in special-education class at Franklin Roosevelt Junior-Senior High School, where Leo, sixteen, was a sophomore and Mario, thirteen, was in eighth grade.

No news item would appear in the *Perrysburg Journal* about Liza Deaver. Only minors were involved, and the victim so young.

There were ten or eleven of them. They'd cajoled Liza into coming with them to Huron Park after school. They'd tramped through the muddy playing fields, past the skeletal trellises of the municipal rose garden to the swimming-pool area, to the old stucco building where refreshments were sold in summer and where there was a men's room and a women's room and [illegible] for the [illegible] building [illegible] city, locked [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] ment wall. Both [illegible] were [illegible]

The boys brought Liza into the men's room.

Questioned afterward by police, schoolteachers, parents, the boys would claim, "Liza wanted to come with us." "It was Liza's idea." "Liza said she'd done this before, with her brother." Liza would deny this, Liza's parents would deny it, strenuously. Liza hadn't been injured enough to require hospitalization, but her clothes had been torn, her nose bloodied, her body bruised and chafed. Still, the boys insisted it had been Liza's idea. They'd been "nice" to her, they said. Witnesses would corroborate that they'd given her presents she'd eagerly accepted: a Mars bar, a plastic pearl necklace found in the trash, a perfumy deodorant. (Liza Deaver was notorious around school for her strong, horsey odor.) The boys' fathers hired a single lawyer to represent their sons, a friend of Daddy's retained by the AFL-CIO branch union to which Daddy belonged, and a public hearing in juvenile court was avoided.

After the incident no one wanted to talk about it much [illegible] at least in my presence. Leo and Mario were subdued, respectful of our father, for weeks, like kicked dogs. They had 9:00 P.M. curfews; Leo wasn't allowed to drive for six weeks. My mother said, incensed, "Those Deavers better get her fixed, that one. Before it's too late."

I asked what "fixed" meant. It scared me to think that whatever the boys had done, Liza might need fixing, like a broken clock.

Disdainfully my mother said, "Like a cat, spayed. So it won't have kittens."

Growing up, we Dellamora kids knew that our Daddy would die for us. We never had to [illegible] [illegible] course [illegible] except [illegible] was too extravagant to have occurred to us. Still, we knew

Our father had fought in Korea, years before I was born. He'd tease me, saying it was lucky the shrapnel hit [illegible] which it did, in the air, not in

"If you know what, 'cause maybe I'm [illegible] would've been born." (I knew this was a joke. But not very funny, to me.) Daddy was cited for heroism, saving several other soldiers, but he said he was twenty-three at the time. "Too stupid to know what I was doing." None of us believed this. Daddy was one who thought you should die for your friends, your brothers, your family. No questions asked. He lent money to all the deadbeat relatives, including his own heavy-drinking father. He was always doing favors for guys in the union, for "up-and-coming" boxers and for "over the hill" boxers—sometimes the same man, after a few years' interim. Daddy was fond of the cryptic remark *Revenge is a dish best served cold*, but we'd noticed how he was always making up with men he'd been feuding with.

Another remark he liked, from the boxing world, was *What goes around comes around*. Meaning not just bad but good too. The good you do will be returned to you. Eventually.

In April 1973, when Jadro Filer was beaten unconscious and died, and the lawyer my father hired to defend Leo and Mario pleaded their case to prosecutors, the defense of impulsive, hot-headed boys didn't work out so well for them, or for my [illegible] Walt and [illegible] neighborhood friend named Don Brinkhaus. And this time I was involved.

Did I know Jadro Filer, or any of his family? Did I have Negro friends? ("Negro" was the polite, prescribed term.) There'd been a Negro girl in my fourth-grade class with the [illegible], beautiful name Skyla I'd been friends with, but not the kind of friend who invited you to [illegible] sleepovers. When Skyla dropped out of school I missed her, but never thought to ask where she'd gone.

Nigger lover, I'd be called. A girl of thirteen.

[illegible] fifteen, I was fourteen, living in a walk-up apartment downtown and working for the plumbing contractor our Daddy worked for; he'd been accepted into the union. (No Negroes belonged. This would come out later, the union thought unfairly, [illegible] the [illegible]

Mario was sixteen, a sophomore in high school, big for his age, bored. Leo and Mario were together a lot, cruising in Mario's car, drinking beer with guys mostly Leo's age. Leo was discovering what Daddy called "fucking-real life." He hated working full-time. His girlfriend had broken up with him because of his drinking and general evil temper. He pissed Daddy off saying he wished to hell the Vietnam War hadn't ended so fast, he'd have liked to go over and "see what that shit was all about."

At Perrysburg High there'd be isolated incidents involving white and Negro boys, especially following Friday night sports events, but none of these had involved Jadro Filer. In 1971–72, his senior year at the school, Leo had known Jadro but there'd been no "bad blood" between them, he insisted. Mario would deny it, too. Certainly they were aware of Jadro on the basketball team, who hadn't been? Perrysburg wasn't a large school: fewer than five hundred students. Everybody knew everybody else, in some way. But whites and Negroes didn't mix much. On sports teams and in the school band and chorus, in a few of the clubs, maybe. But not much.

There wasn't "mixed" dating. Just about never.

Questioned by county prosecutors if they'd had any special reason to harass Jadro Filer, provoke him into a fight, Leo and the other boys said no. Had they attacked Jadro because he was a Negro?

Repeatedly they denied this. Four white boys, a solitary black boy. But they weren't racists, the attackers.

They'd been drinking since about 10:00 P.M. *We saw this guy walking by himself by the railroad track, cutting through [illegible] and out to Route 11, it looked kind of weird, suspicious. We didn't know who it was . . .* Well, maybe they could see the boy was dark-skinned. Maybe one of them yelled out *Nigger!* Those skid marks in the gravel . . . Maybe Leo, who was driving, aimed the car at the kid just to scare him, to make him run. After that, things got confused.

It had been approximately 12:15 A.M. of April 9, 1973, when Jadro Filer left his girlfriend's house to walk back to his home, a ten-minute w[illegible] under ordinary circumstances, ac[illegible] the railroad embankment, along [illegible] highway shoulder past darkened [illegible] stations, a Taco Bell, a McDonald [illegible] was 12:50 A.M. when an emerge[illegible] call was made reporting a badly b[illegible] en young man lying in a roadside d[illegible] near a railroad culvert. (No other [illegible] was reported that night. But the [illegible] lowing morning, when news of [illegible] beating began to spread through P[illegible] rysburg, an anonymous caller wo[illegible] report to police that he'd seen w[illegible] appeared to be a new-model Buick [illegible] the vicinity of the attack scene, par[illegible] off the highway shortly after midnig[illegible] The caller, slowing, then accelerat[illegible] to speed past, had an impression [illegible] four or five young white men "invol[illegible] in some activity like fighting." T[illegible] caller would supply police with [illegible] first three digits of a car registered [illegible] Leo Dellamora.) By 12:50 A.M., ho[illegible] ever, Leo and Mario were back hor[illegible] They'd dropped Walt and D[illegible] Brinkhaus off, and come directly [illegible] Crescent Avenue. At this time th[illegible] hadn't known, would claim they'd h[illegible] no idea, that Jadro Filer had been be[illegible] en so badly he'd never regain co[illegible] sciousness. They were aroused, exc[illegible] ed. Maybe a little panicked. [illegible] overheard them speaking together [illegible] low, urgent voices. I heard "nigge[illegible] several times repeated. I heard the[illegible] nervous laughter. I hadn't been aslee[illegible] when they came home, and I'd n[illegible] ticed the time. And this was strang[illegible] no headlights sprang onto the wall [illegible] my bedroom, moving swiftly from or[illegible] corner of the room to another as usu[illegible] al when someone turned into our dr[illegible] veway at night. Leo must have cut h[illegible] headlights. Or he'd been driving witl[illegible] out them.

My room was downstairs, towar[illegible] the rear of our house; my single win[illegible] dow overlooked the driveway and[illegible] beyond that, the river. I'd had t[illegible] share this room with Emily for years[illegible] and now I missed her. Always I'[illegible] wanted a room to myself in ou[illegible] crowded household, but now I wa[illegible] lonely a lot, especially at night[illegible] When Daddy was out, which was of[illegible] ten, or my brothers, I'd wait for them[illegible] to come home. I missed them! Pa[illegible] tiently I'd watch for headlights t[illegible] flash onto the walls. That night I wa[illegible]

waiting for Leo to bring Mario back home, and I was hoping Leo would hang out awhile. In the kitchen, having a beer or two.

Dad, Mom, and Johnny Jr. were sleeping upstairs. I left my room and entered the darkened kitchen, barefoot, to wait for Leo and Mario.

The back kitchen door opened out into the garage. It was rarely locked. I opened it just a little and listened. Often I eavesdropped on my brothers. I was never caught, they took so little notice of me. Tonight I couldn't hear clearly what my brothers were saying in the garage. I heard only lowered, isolated words, but one of them was "nigger." I heard the outside faucet being turned on. My brothers were doing something with the hose? Washing the car? I peered through the crack and saw them squatting close together on the floor washing a baseball bat. This was Leo's bat he carried in his car "for protection." Leo and Mario had rolled up their sleeves to wash their hands and forearms, cursing as water sprang up out of the hose onto their clothing.

I wanted to laugh, they looked so funny. They were only about ten feet away and unaware of me.

Why didn't I speak to them then? I would wonder. Any other night, I would have. Why not that night?

Not for a long time would I learn that my brothers were deliberating what to do with the bat during these minutes. *The murder weapon*, it would one day be called. They weren't thinking very clearly, but they knew they had to get rid of the bat, fast. They thought about throwing it into the river, of course—but what if it floated? Even weighed down, a wooden bat might somehow work loose and float. And the river would be the first place Perrysburg cops would look. Finally they decided to bury it somewhere on the riverbank, in the underbrush. A few hundred feet away from the house. There was a lot of litter on the riverbank, this seemed like a practical idea. I saw my brothers wrap the bat in a piece of burlap and I saw them leave the garage, but I couldn't see them for more than a few seconds from my bedroom window. I was mystified. I had no idea what they were doing. I guessed they were drunk. Maybe it was some kind of joke.

About forty minutes later I heard them enter the house. The kitchen. I heard the refrigerator door being opened and shut, the sound of beer cans being opened. Eagerly I left my room to join them. I was a scrawny weed of a girl who adored her big brothers, basking in the most meager glow of their careless attention. And they loved me, I believed. I'd always believed. Calling me, like Daddy, "Curly"—"Curly Red." When they were in the mood.

"Hey guys! What've you been doing, fighting?"

They stared at me as if for a shivery moment they didn't know who the hell I was. What to do about me. They were both drinking beer thirstily. They were breathing through their mouths as if they'd been running uphill. I felt their excitement. Their jackets were unzipped, wet in front. Mario's big-jawed face looked raw; a small cut gleamed beneath his right eye. Leo was rubbing the knuckles of his right hand as if they pained him. But he'd taken time to dampen his longish, lank, sand-colored hair and sweep it back in two wings from his forehead. His skin, like Mario's, was slightly blemished, but he had a brutal handsome face. He had Daddy's young face.

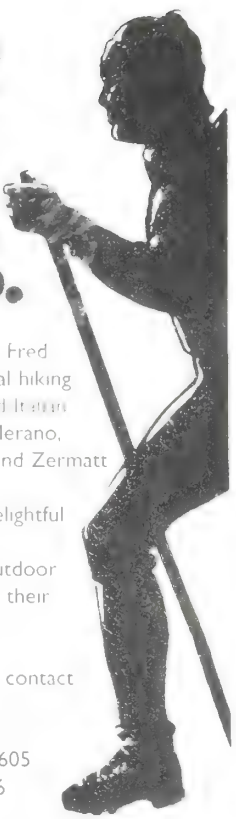
Leo said, with his crisp smile, "Some sons of bitches over at the Falls. But we're okay, see? Don't tell Mom."

Mario said, "Yeah, Curly. Don't tell Mom."

No need to warn me against telling Daddy. None of us would ever have ratted to our father. Even if we hated one another's guts, we wouldn't. That was a betrayal so profound and cruel as to be indefinable, for Daddy's punishment would be swift and pitiless; and for a certain space of time Daddy would withhold his love from the one he'd punished.

I asked who it was they'd been fighting. How badly I wanted to be like them: a brother to them. Though I knew it was hopeless, they'd shrug as they always did when

Hike the Alps.



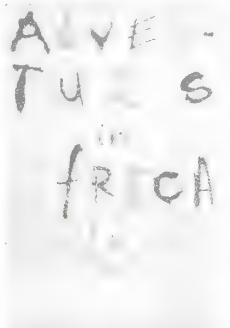
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Gianni Celati
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Foreword by **Rebecca West**



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I asked prickly questions. Leo said prickly, "You got to promise you won't say anything, Curly. Okay?"

I shrugged and laughed. "Gimme a sip of your beer."

Leo handed me his can, then Mario. It wasn't beer but Daddy's favorite ale. I hated the taste, even the smell, but was determined to keep trying to like it, until one day I would like it just fine. I swallowed, I choked a little. I said, "I promise."

Next day, news of the beating of Jadro Filer spread through Perrysburg. Even in junior high no one was talking about much else. I heard, and I knew.

A Negro boy, basketball player at the high school. Beaten by several not yet identified white boys. Left unconscious by the side of Route 11. Sometime after midnight. In critical condition in intensive care at Perrysburg General Hospital.

I was frightened for Leo and Mario, I was in dread of their being arrested. I would tell no one what I knew.

But already Perrysburg police were making inquiries about Leo, Mario, Walt, Don Brinkhaus. They had the first three digits of Leo's license plate and a partial description of his car. Leo was picked up at work. Mario had gone to school groggy and nervous, trying to behave as if nothing was wrong, but he was called out of third period class and taken downtown to the police station. I would learn later that Daddy had accompanied Leo and Mario to the police station; he'd arranged for a lawyer to join them. My mother, at home, was agitated, preoccupied. I knew it was expected of me to ask, "Where's Mario, Mom? Where's Daddy? Is something wrong?" But my mother turned away.

In silence Mom and I watched the local TV news at 6:00 P.M. The lead item was the "severe beating" of Jadro Filer, a "popular basketball star" at PHS. I saw my mother's lips move wordlessly as sometimes in church, at mass, she knelt, shut her eyes, moved her lips in silent prayer like an exhausted woman in a trance. Such public behavior embarrassed me now that I was a teenager. Everything about my mother embarrassed me. I hated her for her spreading hips and flaccid upper arms, the creases in her face, her scared shiny eyes. That night, seeing her praying as she stared at the TV screen, I was filled with raging contempt.

How much did my mother know? How much did she refuse to know?

That night I was wakened from exhausting dreams by voices. At first I thought it was the wind, then I understood it was Daddy talking with my brothers in the kitchen. His voice was low and urgent, and their voices were murmurs. Occasionally Daddy's voice would be raised, but I couldn't hear any words distinctly, and I didn't want to hear. I was sick with the knowledge of what Leo and Mario had done. I had no desire to eavesdrop. Never would I eavesdrop on anyone again. I lay in my room in my bed hunched beneath the covers. I knew that, if anyone questioned me as they'd been questioning my brothers, I couldn't lie. I could lie to my brothers and sisters but to no adult. I would have to tell the truth. In confession, I listed the sins I'd committed, which included sins of omission. Usually these were small, venial sins. But this was different. If the priest asked me . . . If one of my teachers asked me . . . All day I'd been thinking of Jadro Filer. His face on the front page of the newspaper. On TV. *I can't be like my brothers. I hate them.*

Daddy, Leo, and Mario were in the kitchen much of the night. I lay with my hands pressed over my ears. I seemed to know that, upstairs in her bed, Mom was lying awake, too, not-hearing. I seemed to know that Daddy was asking my brothers what they knew about the beating, and my brothers were insisting in hurt, aggrieved voices that they knew nothing. Police had questioned them for hours, and hotly and angrily, like the other two boys, they'd denied everything. My father must have been exhausted by the ordeal of the police station, and humiliated, because he was friends with a number of Perrysburg police officers. Each time he asked Leo and Mario, their replies were more vehement. Of the four boys under suspicion, Leo would probably have been the most convincing. Mario, the youngest, would have been least convincing. Mario with the scabby scratch beneath his right eye. Mario, shifting his shoulders, sweating as he lied to Daddy yet like a tightrope walker venturing across the rope, in terror of falling he couldn't walk back. *We don't know nothing. We didn't do it! They just want to arrest somebody white.*

I wondered: Did Daddy believe them?

Jadro Filer died in the hospital on April 11.

There was a rumor that Jadro had been "involved in drugs." He'd been beaten by "black drug dealers" from Niagara Falls. There was a rumor he'd been killed by his girlfriend's older brother. Or: it had been a random attack, white racist skinheads from Niagara Falls.

These rumors came to nothing. Leo, Mario, Walt, and Don Brinkhaus were summoned back to the police station. And Daddy went with them again.

The phone rang repeatedly, and Mom refused to answer. Finally I took the receiver off the hook.

But Leo and Mario weren't yet arrested. Their names had not been released to the media. Daddy insisted Leo move back into his old room. There'd been "racist" threats against him, and he wasn't safe in his apartment downtown. Mario was told by the high school principal he should stay home for a while, feelings were running high between whites and blacks at PHS and Mario's presence was "undesirable." Mom wanted to keep me home from school too, but I refused. I didn't care if my teachers and the other kids looked at me strangely. I needed to be at school. I loved school! The thought of being kept home panicked me. I couldn't bear to be trapped here where my parents and my brothers were waiting for—what? What would save them? For somebody else to be arrested for the crime? (As my mother said, "The people who did this terrible thing. The guilty people.")

There was the hope, too, never uttered aloud, that the evidence police were assembling would be only circumstantial, not strong enough to

take before a grand jury. This was what the boys' lawyers insisted.

Neighbors, friends of Daddy's from work, relatives, dropped by our house to show their support. Rick, Mariana, Emily, came to supper. It was like old times: nine of us Dellamoras at the table. Mom's older, favored daughters helping her in the kitchen. There was no subject of conversation except Leo and Mario and the injustice of what the police were doing to them. The name "Jadro Filer" was never spoken, there was reference only to "the Negro boy," "the black boy." No more did my brothers refer to Jadro as "nigger." My brothers didn't speak of Jadro at all. It was the Perrysburg police who were reviled, held in contempt. And some of these men had called themselves friends of my father! There was the "anonymous" driver who'd supplied the police with Leo's partial license-plate number, to throw them off the track . . . Our household was under siege, the very walls and roof buffeted by ferocious winds. We Dellamoras huddled inside, clutching one another. Daddy would protect us, we knew.

With so many people around it wasn't hard for me to avoid my brothers. Still, they sought me out. "Hey Curly: what're you hearing at school?" Their eyes snatching at mine. *You promised, remember? Not to tell.* They had no idea that I knew about the bat. Only that I knew they'd been fighting that night, with some guys from the Falls. And I'd promised not to tell Mom. Meaning I'd promised not to tell anybody. I shrank from Leo's gaze. He saw something furtive and guilty in my face. *You wouldn't rat on us, right? Your brothers?*

Only years later would I wonder what Leo and Mario might have done to me if they'd guessed all that I knew.

I was the girl who never cried, or rarely. But now I started to cry easily. My outer skin hurt like sunburn, my eyes filled with moisture. At school, at home. Watching TV and seeing Jadro Filer's mother and older brother interviewed, seeing Mrs. Filer clutch a tissue to her face, dissolve into tears, I began crying, too. *He always was so sensitive. Something's the matter with Lili Rose.* The taste of it was like copper pennies in my mouth.

Angrily, my mother switched off the TV. "They're just doing that for the TV cameras. All that attention, to make people feel sorry for *them*."

I followed Mom out into the kitchen. I said, "Mom? It was Leo and Mario. I saw them with the baseball bat. They were the ones." But my mother was at the sink, running water hard. She stood with her back to me, furious, shaking. Somewhere close by the telephone began ringing; we waited for Daddy to pick it up, in another room.

Next day in homeroom I was crying, sniffling. Wiping my nose with my fingers like a small dazed child. This was the third day after Jadro Filer's death. My homeroom teacher called me to her desk to ask cautiously, "Is there something wrong, Lili Rose? Are you upset about something?" She knew the rumor about my brothers. "Are you sick?" I shook my head no. But the woman peered at me worriedly, touched my warm forehead with her fingers, decided I had a fever, and sent me to the school nurse, who made me lie down on a cot, took my temperature, noted that my teeth were chattering. Gently she scolded, "Lili Rose, you're a sick girl. Your temperature is 101 degrees, that's *fever*. Your mother oughtn't to have let you out of the house this morning."

These words, like a curse, made me cry harder. The alarmed nurse called in the school principal, Mr. Mandell, who asked me what was wrong, why was I crying, and somehow it happened that I was telling him about Leo and Mario and the baseball bat; I was telling Mr. Mandell how afraid I was, how angry my father would be, I didn't want to go home . . . Within a few minutes plainclothes police officers, one of them a woman, had been summoned to speak with me.

That was how it began. And once it began, it couldn't be stopped.

It would become a matter of public record: the unsolicited, uncoerced, purely voluntary information provided police [illegible] Dellamora . . . [illegible] crew-cut [illegible]. Filer beating death

I was moved [illegible] with my Aunt Bea [illegible] who hadn't [illegible] Bea. [illegible] practically [illegible] foster home. None of the other relatives wanted me. My sister Mariana and her husband, [illegible] Emily. *[illegible] me want to puke.*

I had to change schools, too.

I would live with my aunt and uncle for four years in their prissy little house on Pearson Street. Aunt Bea was my mother's older sister. Uncle Clyde was a bricklayer. So boring, my mind drifted out the window when they spoke to me. In the beginning my aunt hugged me a lot, mistaking my passivity for sadness. She told me I'd learn to be happy with her and Uncle Clyde, I'd get used to my new home, my new room, things would "settle down" and after a while my parents would forgive me—all of which, and I knew so at the time, was bullshit. The first few days I was stunned. I was too young to realize how the only life I'd known had been taken from me. Those swift uncalculated minutes in the school infirmary. The nurse gently scolding. *Your mother oughtn't to have let you.* In my dreams in years to come I would mistake the school nurse for my mother. And there was Mr. Mandell crouching beside me. *Lili Rose? What is it? Is there trouble at home?* I had to tell them what I knew. I had no choice.

In AA they tell you: nobody starts out thinking, as a kid, he's going to wind up an alcoholic or a junkie. Add to that an alcoholic twice-divorced with no kids, age forty-three and counting. Add to that a daughter denounced by her family for talking to the police on two brothers. Nobody starts out thinking she'll be so defined, but there it is. Blunt and irrevocable as a headline.

13-YEAR-OLD SISTER OF
SUSPECTS PROVIDES
INFORMATION
TO PERRYSBURG POLICE
[illegible] Five-to-Seven Curfew

So they moved me away. In an afternoon. I wouldn't speak with Leo

loathing in their faces. I wouldn't be informed but would read in the *Pe-* team had found Leo's baseball bat, buried amid litter about two hundred yards from our house. The bat, its handle wrapped in black tape, had been washed to a degree, but blood-stains and partial fingerprints remained; most incriminating, wood splinters matching those in the bat had been embedded in Jadro Filer's scalp. I would read that, faced with lawyers representing my brothers and their friends advised their clients to plead guilty, not to murder charges but to manslaughter. The lawyers negotiated plea bargains with county prosecutors, first-degree manslaughter for Leo, who'd actually wielded the bat, second-degree manslaughter for Mario, Walt, Don. Because he released after three. Leo received the stiffest sentence, seven to fifteen years at Red Bank Correctional, a medium-security prison. The black overly lenient sentences, considering that Jadro Filer had been killed in an unprovoked attack; this was further evidence of racism and bigotry in Perrysburg. Some members of the white community denounced the sentences as too harsh, evidence of racism and bigotry in Perrysburg.

For a long time I'd wake in my and hopeful. Thinking, *Maybe it*

At least there was no trial. I against my brothers in

N

so much . . . courage."

They'd called me back, and like an eager dog I returned. On a wind-blown March morning, light flashing off the river like broken pieces of mirror, I brought my dying father a bouquet of white carnations from a it Daddy had ever been a man to admire or even take notice of flowers, but what else? I could hardly have brought him a bottle of whiskey. I could hardly have brought a man dying of emphysema a handful of those fat foul-smelling Portuguese cigars he'd loved.

"Daddy, I'm . . . Lili Rose. I guess Mom told you I was coming."

Daddy nodded at me, frowning. It was all he could do, sucking oxygen His eyes careening onto me, and away. The truth was he'd never intended to get old like this. He'd been contemptuous of sickly, self-pitying relatives. I'd heard him say to whoever was listening, *Jesus! Take me out and shoot me, I ever get like that.*

Daddy had become a sunk-chested man with drooping eyelids and trembling hands. And the veins bulging in those hands, frightening to see. The hospice nurse said, if there's bitterness between you . . . I wanted to lean close to Daddy to whisper, *Is there, bitterness between us? After so long?* It was up to him, of course.

My mother had forgiven me, I guess. Those years she'd avoided me, saying her heart was broken. Well, what of my heart? I'd given up explaining. No one cared. *You made your choice, now live with it. Ruined your brothers' lives.* My sisters were the ones who'd urged me to return, now Daddy was sick. They'd told me it had come out just recently: Daddy had given, over a period of years, more than five thousand dollars to Jadro Filer's mother. ("He wanted it anonymous. He didn't want it *known*.") They'd prepared me for the changes in our father, yet somehow they had not. This strangeness! Not just John Dellamora was an old, sick man but he was in a hospital bed in our house, in my former room. He hadn't been able to climb stairs in a while, so this was a practical solution. I wondered if he resented being in my old room. Or if he even remembered whose room this was. From the window, the river looked unchanged. It was slate-colored, so turbulent you couldn't have told which direction the current was flowing in. In a drowse of morphine Daddy's droopy-lidded eyes held more puzzlement than anger or judgment. me, but I believed he was listening as I spoke of my life with the earnestne of one who must take it on faith th ing. ". . . Teaching, in Boston. Th summer I've been invited to Venic . . ." But there was the hospice nurs my age. I saw Daddy watching Yolar da, too. Possibly he thought th Yolanda was his daughter. His favori daughter, who'd never left home. Ne er betrayed him. Never "ratted." Th hospital had discharged him and se him home to die. It wasn't just en physema, it was heart congestion. E haustion. My father hadn't been placid man, yet his ending would placid, we were grateful for this. I w speaking softly. "Daddy? I had to do I didn't have any choice . . ." I wo dered if this was true: don't we alwa have choices? Even a child of thirte has a choice. I knew what was right did what was right, I'd do it again. I w stubborn, defiant. This was my true nature. Maybe I'd ruined my brothe lives and maybe even my own, but would do it again.

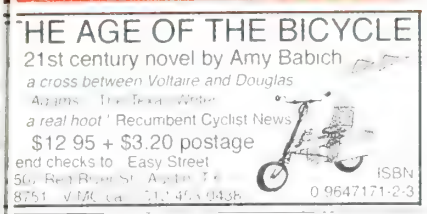
I didn't tell Daddy this. His le eyelid drooped as if winking at m He was trying to smile, was he? *Cu Red. How's my girl?* My hair wasn red any longer, and it wasn't curly. was a passionate AA advocate: o day at a time, the highest wisdo You can eke out a life like that. Li Daddy's labored breathing, in whi desperation was put to good us When you have less than 40 perce of your lungs remaining, you u every cubic centimeter of those r maining lungs.

Of Daddy's seven children, L was the one who hadn't returne Leo had served five years in priso was released to parole at the age twenty-four, choosing to reside the Red Bank area; two years la he left New York State and never r turned to Perrysburg. Where L was, somewhere on the West Coa my mother and sisters knew, but didn't dare inquire. *Why do you wa to know? Why you?*

Mario had stayed away from Pe rysburg for fifteen years, then he'd r turned. He worked for a local co struction company as a carpenter. He

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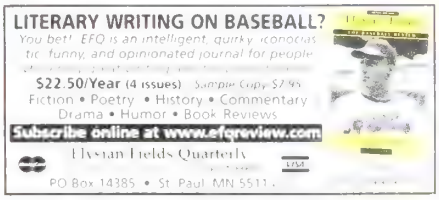
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"Serbs, having thrown a tyrant out of office, were waiting in the dark for instructions and to help them put the electricity back on. California was running low on power. In Maine's wild Atlantic salmon was placed on the endangered species list, to the dismay of Maine's Atlantic salmon fishermen. Boston banned mercury thermometers, each of which contains 0.7 grams of the toxin, enough to contaminate a small lake. Russia decided to demolish the space station Mir after the Duma, despite Dennis Tito, an American businessman who had hoped to pay $20 million to visit the doomed station, and television executives, who were planning to film a 'reality-based' television program there. China banned a gathering of poets. A robot successfully read the mind of a monkey."

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STORY

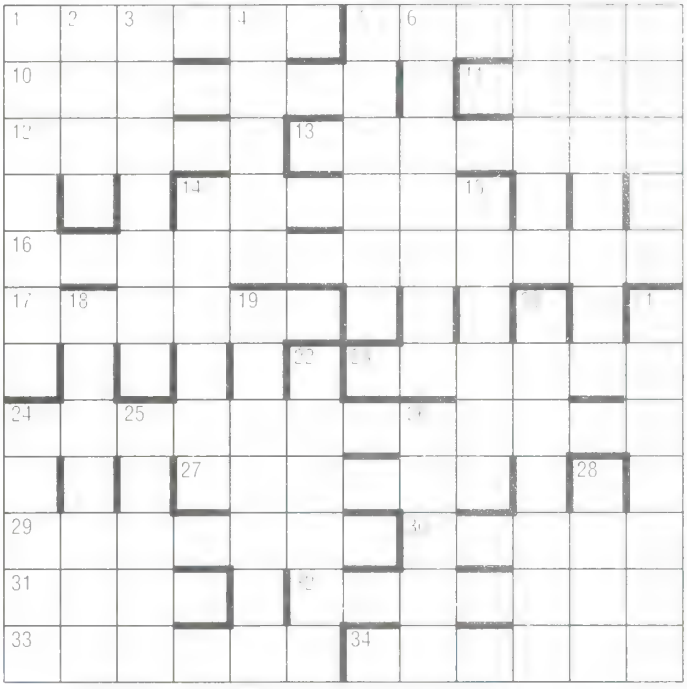
Continued from page 92

married twice, like me. Divorced twice. Like me, no children. I wondered if he'd given up drinking. He'd become a boneless-looking man of middle age, taciturn, purse-lipped, like an awkwardly hip high school teacher in tinted aviator sunglasses and suede leather jackets from Sears. We'd met on the front walk of the house on Crescent Avenue, by accident; Mario was leaving as I was approaching. I tasted panic seeing him, recognizing him immediately, my brother Mario I'd betrayed . . . I was frightened he might spit into my face. Or—the walk was slick with melting snow—he might kick my legs out from under me. My terror must have shown in my face. Mario laughed. He grinned, shaking his head, as if there was an old joke between us, moving past me on the narrow walk with no intention of speaking, certainly not of taking my hand, which I was holding out tentatively, but at the curb where his car was parked he called back, "Lili Rose, it's okay. Only just too bad about the old man, huh? Seventy-three isn't old." I said, "Mario!" But he was in his car gunning the motor.

Now at Daddy's bedside I'm thinking, suddenly excited, I'll call Mario. Tonight. If he hangs up, I might drive by his place. I'll get the address from Mariana. I'll knock at his door, I'll see Mario again. Goddamn, I will.

I've taken Daddy's unresisting hand. I believe I can feel his fingers tightening. I'm thinking the wild extravagant thoughts you think at such times: the world is a hospice, we're all in it together. "Daddy, I love you. Even if . . ." Even if I've hated you. I lived with Aunt Bea and Uncle Clyde, who'd waited for me to love them like a daughter, but that hadn't happened; I'd broken their hearts too, moving out on the June morning following my high school graduation, living in a half-dozen cities, two husbands and more lovers than I can recall and no children, whether by design or chance I couldn't have said, but none of that sorry crap figures here. None of the rest of my life figures here. ■

PUZZLE



Sixes and Sevens—Revisited

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to Zander et al The Listener)

The clues to words of six and seven letters in length are grouped separately. Solver must determine their position in the diagram.

Answers include two proper names. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 68.

[illegible]

11. Famous Christian princess as an alternative (4)
12. Contrary physicist holds meeting — mutually these sides can't ever come together (5)
16. Unlikely retaliations from a philosopher (12)
24. Deer House? It's in the rear (12)
30. With time, one who is sorry gets more upright (5)
31. British prime minister [illegible] (4)

[illegible]

2. Wild goat monkey with hair (4)
4. First time acting up, floated down river (5)
7. Mixture of mayonnaise, garlic oil, A-1 Sauce (5)
9. Victim gotta, topless [illegible] (5)
24. Hopper placed by male in ladies' rooms (5)
25. Some telephonic errors [illegible] (5)
26. To us apart? (5)
28. To be in part, where sewers come together? Pure nonsense (4)

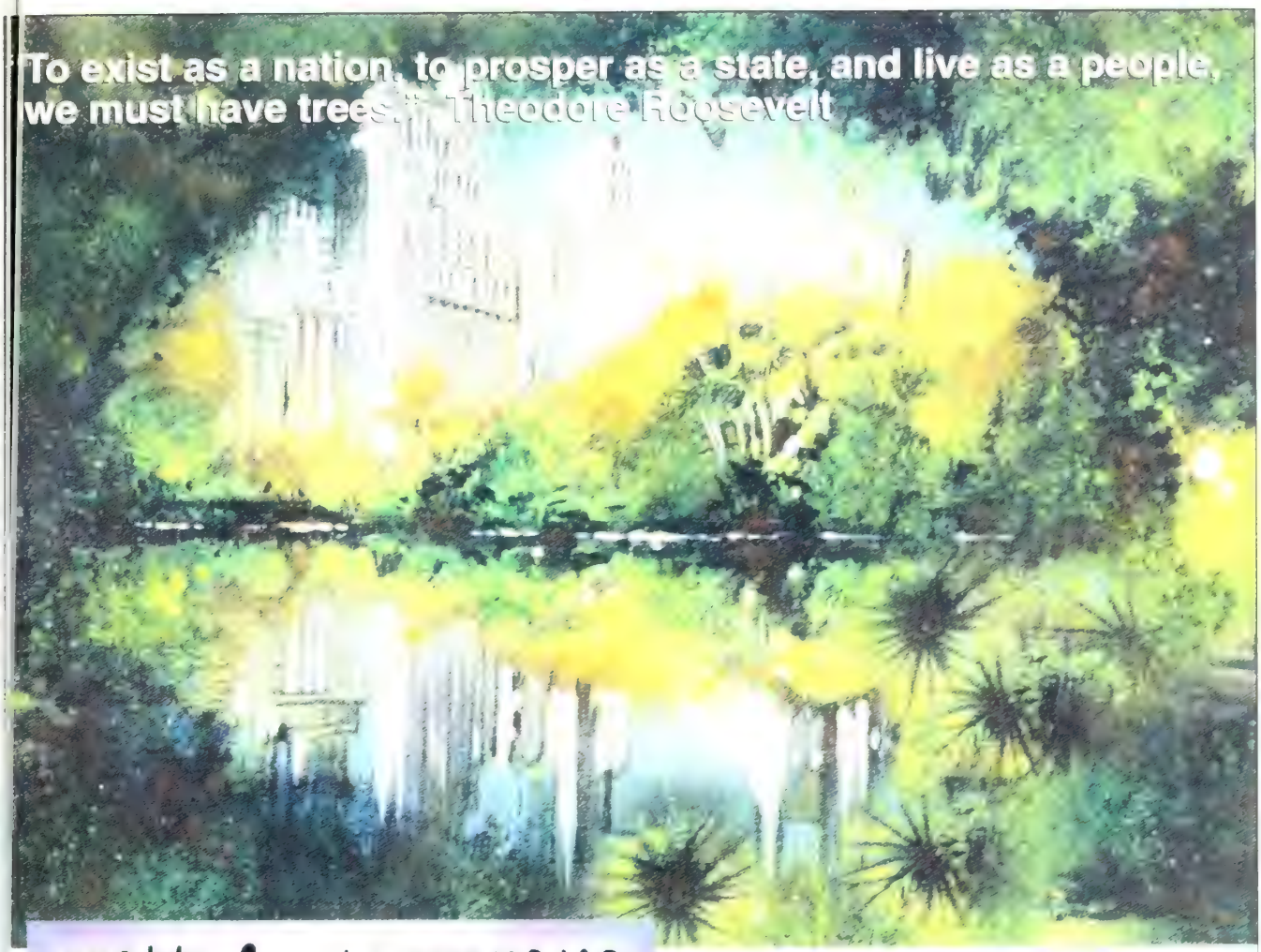
[illegible]

a. Shoot up during jazzy dances
b. Temporarily gave in: the limits of pay is enough
c. ABC followers rip apart Ice-T craft
d. Put a gun in a prosecutor's hands by main force?
e. Like [illegible] spectrist
f. Expenditure not in place.
g. . . . is due process, mister
h. Exercise that stunks up place shut up inside [illegible]
k. Stayed off or on course
l. [illegible]
m. Mischief otherwise upset fellow seen around hosp[illegible]
n. Composed inflamed letters on a ship with one on [illegible]
o. Hip-hop stages comeback — show place almost [illegible]
r. [illegible]
s. Boxer is one to confront in private
t. [illegible]
Drinks from a bowl, for example, flipping a bit of [illegible]
v. [illegible]
x. [illegible]
y. Sequin design on shirt — this requires looking into
z. [illegible]
[illegible]

Contest Rules: [illegible] New York, N.Y. 10027. [illegible] April 7. [illegible] winner will be notified by mail. The [illegible] Brooklyn, New York.

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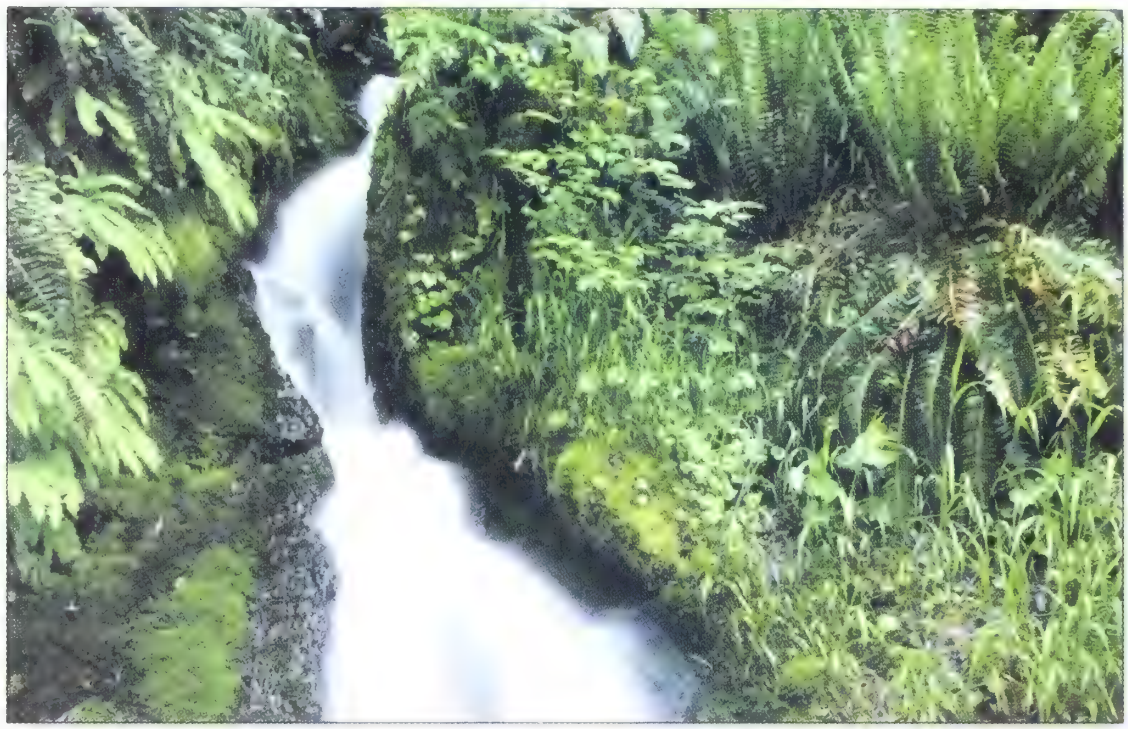
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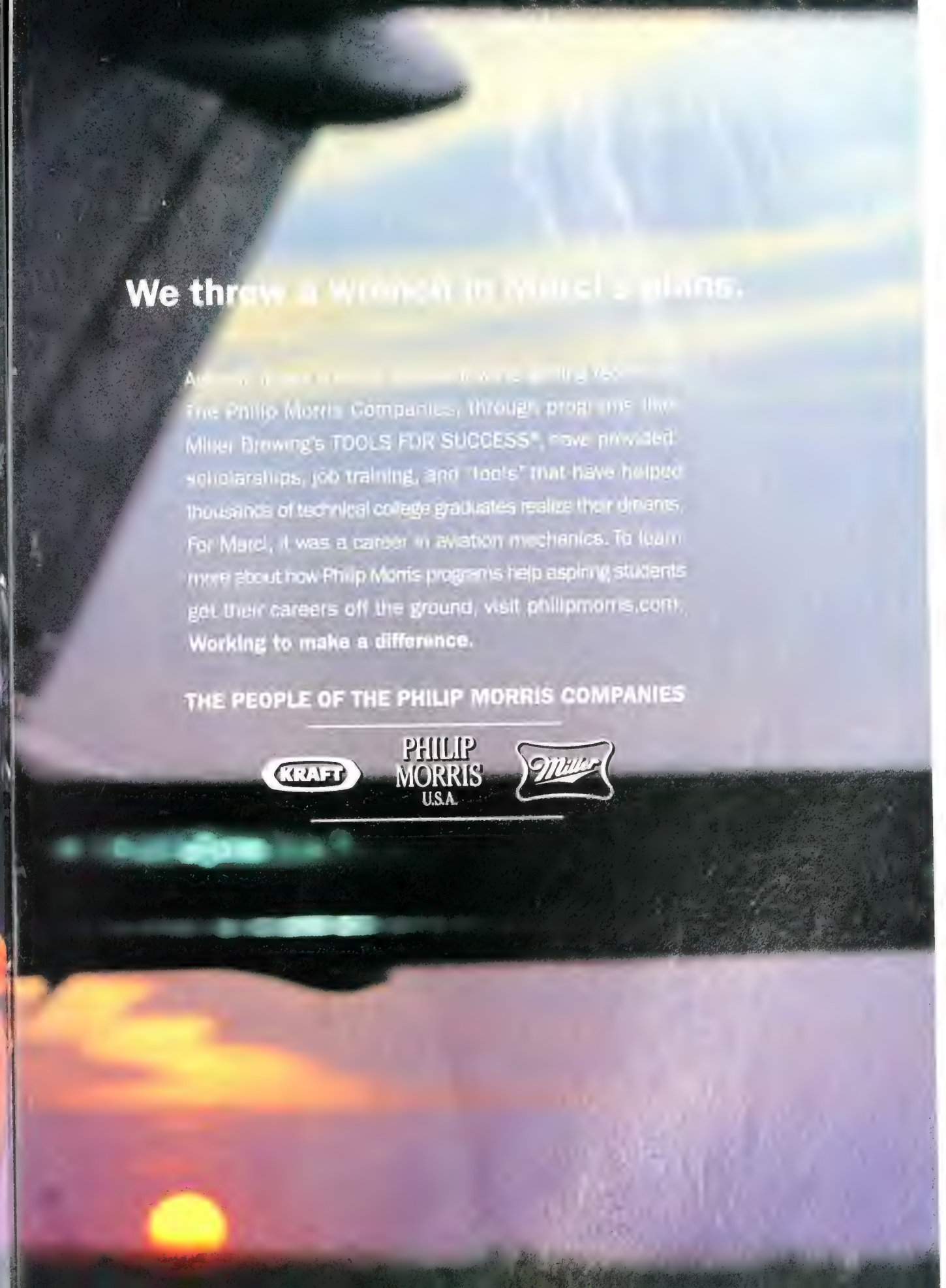
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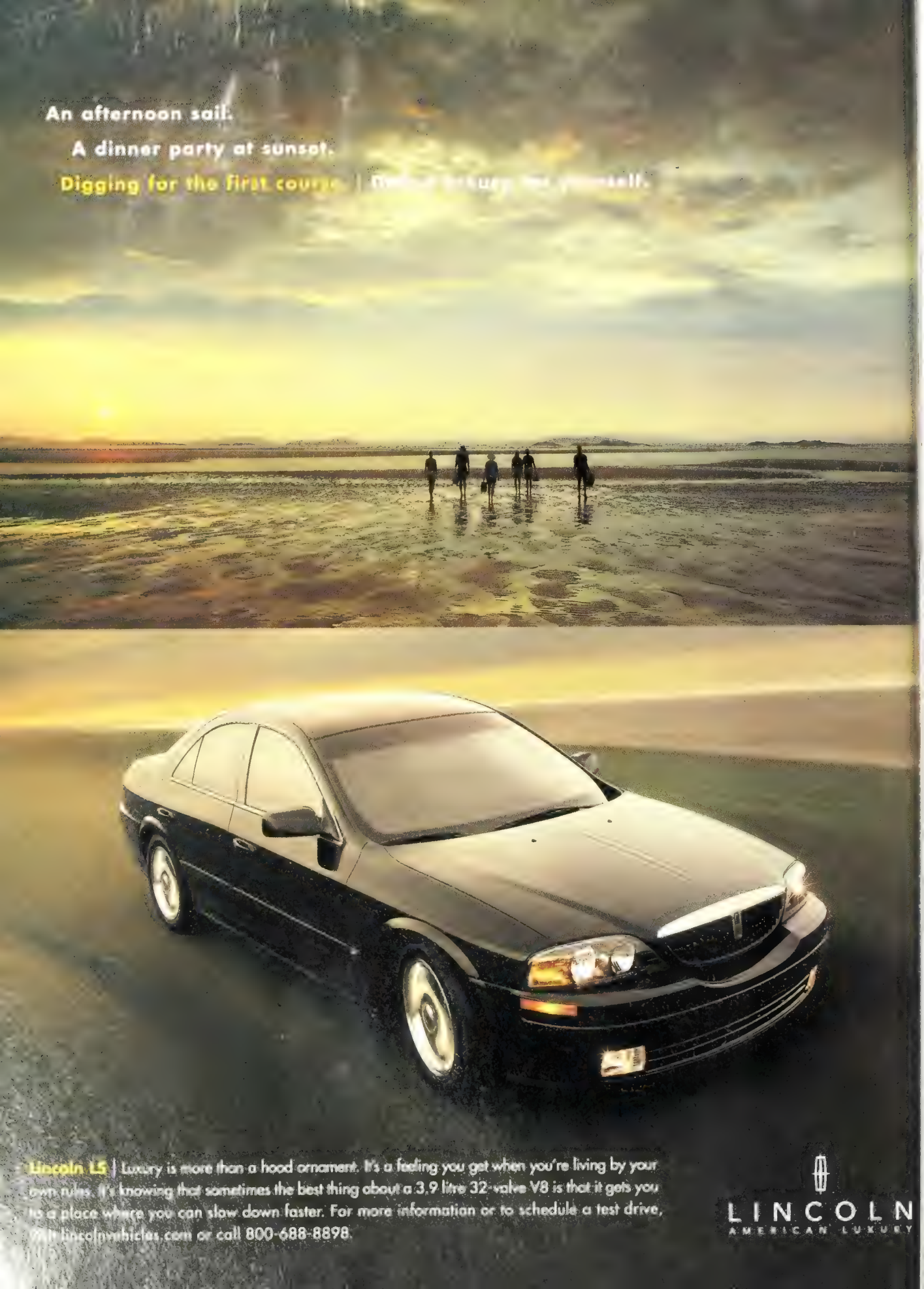
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LETTERS

Regarding Henry

In attempting to construct an argument for trying Henry Kissinger as a war criminal ["The Case Against Henry Kissinger," February, March], Christopher Hitchens writes that the President's National Bipartisan Commission on Central America was "staffed by Oliver North and [that it] whitewashed death-squad activity on the isthmus." I served on the Kissinger Commission and can report that although its staff was large and competent it did not include Oliver North. He simply coordinated security trips we made to Central America. He had nothing to do with the commission's work or its report. This is a comparatively minor howler.

Hitchens's remark about the death squads, however, shows that he has not read the commission's report. This document repeatedly condemns death squads in Central America, characterizing them as "designed to terrorize opponents, fight democracy, protect entrenched interests, and restore reactionary regimes. Whatever their aims, these methods are totally repugnant to the values of the United States."

The report characterized the security forces in Guatemala thus: "In the cities they have murdered those even suspected of dissent. In the countryside, they have at times killed indiscriminately to repress any sign of support for the guerrillas. Such actions are morally unacceptable." And again: "the United States cannot countenance the brutal alternative methods of counterinsurgency which wreak intolerable violence upon the civilian population."

Given Hitchens's preposterous claim that the commission "whitewashed" the death squads, who can put any credence in anything he says? One is reminded of the title he gave one of his books: *No One Left to Lie To*.

By Hitchens's bizarre definition of "war criminal," Kissinger would have distinguished company on the dock: Churchill, Truman, Carter, and Bush along with any other national leader who has made responsible use of administrative authority.

John Silber
Chancellor, Boston University
Boston

Christopher Hitchens's originality and his use of evidence and international law are open to debate. But his reliance on the late General Telford Taylor's writings to argue that criminous heads of state must be tried, and that aerial bombardment constitutes a triable offense, is in error. As his biographer, my impression is that Taylor, though a passionate Vietnam dove, had too nuanced and forthright a view of international law to provide the ammunition Hitchens needs.

True, Taylor did say that General Westmoreland and Abrams, and even Presidents Johnson and Nixon, might be guilty of war crimes based on the *Yamashita* decision (in which the Supreme Court let stand a military conviction of a Japanese commander for atrocities in the Philippines that he neither ordered nor condoned nor knew

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. But, like most civil libertarians, lor also thought that *Yamashita* was rocedural disgrace. He argued that law was more accurately stated in remberg's "Hostage Case" (*U.S. v.* t), which held commanders respon- le for war crimes only when they new or should have known" of the ocities, a more restrictive standard. Similarly, Taylor wrote repeatedly inst the aerial bombing campaigns er both North and South Vietnam t he knew that, except where it was monstrably unnecessary, indiscrim- ate, and disproportionate, strategic mbing had not been criminal during orld War II and that international v in this area had not evolved in the tervening twenty years. Taylor's view bombing is illustrated in his De- mber 1972 trip to Hanoi with Joan ez and others who opposed the war. ne delegation not only saw devasta- n but was itself bombed—Nixon's hri tmas surprise. Taylor, nonethe- ss, told the press and his North Viet- mese hosts that the bombing was uel, destructive, but not a violation the laws of war. (The clear viola- on, he added, was North Vietnam's ilure to evacuate American POWs shelter as soon as bombing began.)

Taylor opposed stretching the hetoric of international law to chal- nge even dreadful policy, as Hitchens uld have discovered. In misconstru- g Taylor's arguments, what Hitchens as managed to do is convince this ng-time opponent of Nixon and issinger's foreign-policy disasters that ven Kissinger deserves better than to e tried before the kind of interna- onal tribunal recently endorsed by ne contrite Robert McNamara.

nathan A. Bush
Center for Scholars and Writers
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hristopher Hitchens responds

I accept John Silber's inanely nig- ling correction: Oliver North was "se- urity," not "staff." I seem to remember he whole Reagan-Bush Administra- ion experiencing a similar confusion as o whether the lieutenant colonel worked in the White House basement r the Oval Office.

Much of that confusion was of

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[illegible] to [illegible] purposes of obfuscation, and the rest of Silber's letter shows the petty skills he learned in that very school. But he cannot expect us to forget that.

1) Henry Kissinger announced in advance that his commission's objective was "to rally Central America out of politics."

2) The mild and formal rhetoric on death squads in the report was accompanied by lavish praise for General Ríos Montt's appalling regime in Guatemala and by requests for hugely increased military aid to the armed forces of El Salvador, whose leaders were also the named conveners of the death squads.

3) The report contains a dissenting end note, signed by Henry Kissinger and John Silber, objecting to the main report on the grounds that even its equivocal words on "conditioning" U.S. aid to a reduction in state-sponsored murder are too likely to be interpreted as soft on Communism.

Silber may have forgotten his own role in this, not to speak of his role in "certifying" a grotesque election in Guatemala in 1985 as "free and fair," or of his effort to purge his own university of its scholarly dissidents. But others have not acquired the necessary amnesia, or the readiness to think of history as bunk. Only a hysterical "bunkist" could conceivably bracket the name of Churchill, or even Bush, with that of Kissinger. What assassination orders, issued by these men, is Silber thinking of? Which secret carpet-bombings? Which military coups in neighboring democracies? Silber is living proof that our system of higher education is indeed failing us badly.

I'm naturally sorry to have depressed Jonathan Bush, but I would urge him to bear in mind that Telford Taylor wrote his splendid book before the bombing of Cambodia was revealed. As for General Yamashita, it has been persuasively argued that he himself did not receive a fair trial. This, however, is not the same as to say that the standards by which he was judged were not the right standards. Nor is it the same as to say that the United States did not agree, as it did, to be bound by those same rules. That was my point in the first place.

[illegible] Noam Chomsky

Part I" incorrectly states that the United States dropped a 15,000-ton bomb on Koh Tang Island in Cambodia. The bomb, a BLU-82, weighed 15,000 pounds. We regret the error.

Banana Republicans

In his recent Notebook ["Civics Lesson," February], Lewis Lapham marvels, as I did, at the extreme rhetoric of Republican partisans during the recent electoral farce and wonders where they got their sense of entitlement, that "certain knowledge of their own virtue." Lapham makes a strong case for transcendent ideological zeal, but there may be a simpler explanation. Under our capitalist system one condition—payment for goods and services—makes people absolutely certain something belongs to them. The Republicans *knew* Florida was rightfully theirs for the unassailable reason that they had already paid for it.

Tom Faulkner
Royal Oak, Mich.

Floral Derangement

We at the Society of American Florists (SAF)—representing more than 15,000 growers, wholesalers, importers, and retailers of flowers and plants—read with disappointment the Annotation on the global flower trade ["Fleurs du Mal," Niala Maharaj and Donovan Hohn, February]. It includes several inaccuracies, particularly about flowers imported from Colombia.

Despite the article's claims to the contrary, people who work on flower farms in Colombia benefit from stable jobs, above-average pay, and extended benefits, according to the International Labour Organization. Workers earn one and a half times the minimum-wage requirements and receive such benefits as medical and dental assistance, pensions, child care, and transportation services.

Additionally, Colombia has clear and stringent legislation on agrochemical products and has made enormous efforts to promote safe practices in the handling and application of pesticides. Only those products registered with the Colombian Agricultural Institute and licensed by the Ministry of Health may be applied, and only those registered for use in the United State are authorized in Colombia. In addition, extensive training and protective gear are provided to all personnel involved in applying pesticides.

National entities such as the Colombian Social Security Institute and the National Institute of Health have conducted investigations regarding occupational health. One recent study by the NIH shows that the frequency of health problems among flower workers who handle pesticides is no higher than among those workers who are not exposed. The Colombian floriculture community continues to be an active participant in programs oriented toward improving the health of workers and decreasing occupational risks.

Futhermore, Colombian flower growers participate in an aggressive social and environmental program called Florverde. Using environmental audits, codes of conduct, and counseling, Florverde has brought immense improvement to pest and disease control, human management, and rational soil and water utilization.

Peter Moran
CEO
Society of American Florists
Alexandria, Va.

My experience, as Dole's global director of environmental affairs, suggests that the Colombian flower industry's environmental practices are quite different from those Maharaj and Hohn describe. Although I can't speak for the industry as a whole, the workers I see on Dole farms are equipped with proper protective gear and are trained in environmental awareness, prevention of pollution, and general safe practices. Much care is taken in the greenhouses to minimize the use of crop-protection products, and the conservation of water and the management of soil and organic waste is exemplary.

As a reflection of their environmental ethic, twenty of Dole's farms in Colombia and Ecuador were recently certified to the International Organization for Standardization's environmental-management standard, ISO

Continued on page 80

NOTEBOOK

Revised text

By Lewis H. Lapham

Most of the grounds of the world's troubles are matters of grammar.

—Montaigne

From time to time during last year's election campaign Vice President Al Gore remarked on the increasingly inequitable distribution of the nation's assets—73 percent of the wealth accruing to accounts held by 10 percent of the citizenry—and whenever he did so Governor George W. Bush accused him of "fomenting class warfare." The governor took offense at the suggestion that America somehow had divided itself into a nation of the rich and a nation of the poor, and his speechwriters were put to some pains to refute the evil rumors of distinctions being made on the basis of net worth or social antecedent. Nonsense, they said, no such thing as class difference in the land of the free and the home of the brave. Foul demagoguery, uncivil and preposterous.

Assuming that the governor knew what all the words meant, what then are we to make of his first 100 days in the White House? How else to describe the new administration's legislative agenda—elimination of the inheritance tax, revision of the bankruptcy laws, the repeal of safety regulations in the workplace, easing of restrictions on monopoly, etc.—except as an act of class warfare? Not the aggression that Karl Marx and maybe Ralph Nader had in mind, not the angry poor sacking the mansions of the indolent rich but the aggrieved rich burning down the huts of the presumptuous and trouble-making poor.

During the World Series last year at Yankee Stadium, the management allotted 5,000 tickets to the general public (i.e., the democratic rabble), the remaining 50,000 seats being reserved for persons of wealth and consequence, and prior to the last round of elections the annual compensation awarded to the country's leading business executives (as salary, stock options, living expenses) already exceeded the yearly wage paid to their lowest-ranking employees by a ratio of 400 to 1. Our commercial oligarchy apparently deems the ratio insufficient. Too many crumbs still falling from the corporate banquet tables; too many buyers in the high-end real-estate markets; too many black people free on their own recognizance. What good is the good life unless one can have it all to oneself?

Under most circumstances so abrupt a reversal of egalitarian meaning might require a good deal of fanciful euphemism and tortuous explanation. But a change of government in Washington brings with it a helpful change of vocabulary in the press release and the television broadcast. The shifting around of the language allows for bold and innovative reinterpretations of the American dream, and as we learn to read the revised text, we can begin to appreciate the beauty of the ideal world envisioned by the Republican majority that now controls not only the White House but also both houses of the Congress and the Supreme Court. As follows:

ACCESS

Excellent golfing companions. They know geography.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Milquetoast word formerly employed by Democrats to avoid making unpleasant decisions. (See DEBATE.)

ART

If it can't be understood by schoolchildren, it isn't art.

AUTHORITY, RESPECT FOR

The mark of a well-regulated society. Cite Edmund Burke's definition of a gentleman: "A man who fears God, looks up with awe to kings, with affection to parliaments, with duty to magistrates, with reverence to priests, with respect to nobility."

[illegible]

Meaning depends entirely on the context. Thus, a) with reference to somebody else's investments, a criminal fraud perpetrated by corrupt banks and lying politicians. Or b) with reference to one's own investments, a just reward bestowed upon a courageous entrepreneur.

[illegible]

Famous for rain and funeral processions.

[illegible]

Senseless crimes against humanity.

[illegible]

Course of moral instruction. Diplomatic notes in the language of high explosive, "the only idiom that tyrants understand."

[illegible]

Lifeblood of freedom. (See OIL.)

[illegible]

[illegible]

Once the glorious scene of capitalist miracles. More recently, an ominous paradox.

[illegible]

Must be refurbished. The world is a lot more dangerous than one thinks.

[illegible]

Similar to grants bestowed by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Extremely expensive and far too numerous.

COCAINE

Everybody in Hollywood is addicted to it. The reason why so many movies are impossible to understand.

"COMPASSIONATE CONSERVATIVISM"

Costly lotion manufactured by Estée Lauder exclusively for Neiman Marcus. As precious as the milk of the Virgin or the tears of Christ. Quote Machiavelli: "Severities should be dealt out all at once, that by their suddenness they might give less offense; benefits should be handed out drop by drop, that they may be relished the more."

CONSENSUS

Synonymous with the opinion of Dick Cheney.

CORPORATIONS

Sovereign states, as dominant in our own time as the medieval Church or the legions of ancient Rome. Because they exist in the realm of pure abstraction (like money and the Holy Ghost), they can give birth to their own parents.

[illegible]

Models of the just society. They teach the invaluable lessons of civility. One cannot belong to too many of them.

CRIMINALS

It's safe to assume that anybody earning less than $100,000 a year is probably a criminal. You can recognize them by their clothes.

[illegible]

Testimonies to the triumph of the free market. Compare and contrast Robert Mugabe with Tiger Woods.

[illegible]

We neglect it at our peril.

[illegible]

Mealy-mouthed word formerly employed by Democrats to avoid making unpleasant decisions. (See [illegible])

ENTITLEMENTS

Belong only to people who can pay for them.

ENTREPRENEURS

Heroes of our times. The best ones are Republicans.

ENVIRONMENT

Formerly misperceived as fragile. Now to be understood as sturdy and resilient. Romantic nonsense to think that it must be protected. "Old enough and wise enough to take care of itself."

[illegible]

Nervous disorder that afflicts liberal newspaper columnists. "Poisons the wells of happiness and dims the lamps of conscience."

[illegible]

Bolsters the belief in capitalism among readers of the tabloid press. No matter how profligate an individual's taste for luxury, the expense never exceeds the cost of large-scale social engineering.

[illegible]

Lost tribe. They wrote sentimental diaries and sang fierce songs.

FREE LUNCHES

No such thing. Al Gore believed in them, which is why he lost the election.

[illegible]

Volatile substance similar to mace. Lit too much of it in the hands of the wrong people.

[illegible]

It isn't real; no need to think about it.

GENERALS

Excellent golfing companions. They understand artillery.

[illegible]

Testimonies to the triumph of the free market. Compare and contrast Robert Mugabe with Tiger Woods.

GOVERNMENT REGULATION (OF BUSINESS)

Catastrophic. Destroys initiative. "The vines of government regulation blight the orchards of industry."

GOVERNMENT REGULATION (OF CULTURE)

"Unless we want our children to turn into animals, the media must be restrained."

GREED

Tasteless word. Substitute "husbandry" or "prudence." (See PLUTOCRAT)

HISTORY

It ended happily in 1989.

HOMELESS (THE)

Always with us. With practice one can learn to ignore them.

INFLATION

More terrible in its effects than war or famine.

INTELLECTUALS

Enemies of free enterprise. No intellectual knows what it means to meet a payroll or read a balance sheet.

IRAQ

What Carthage was to the ancient Romans. "It must be destroyed."

JUDGES

None of them live with the consequences of their actions.

LABOR UNIONS

All corrupt. The bosses exploit the membership for private gain.

LEATHER JACKETS

Symbols of democracy. Preferably worn with military insignia.

LIBERALS

Rare species of political malcontent. In Manhattan and Beverly Hills a few eccentric rich people keep them as pets.

LITERATURE

Regional dialect spoken in university English departments.

ARXISM
Failed religion.

NEY
The light of the world and the ndate of heaven. Impossible to enough in its favor. It prolongs , wins elections, relieves suffering, clares war, hires assassins, goes ith for the winter.

NORITIES
They don't have America's best terests at heart. Once coddled by erals

ETICULTURALISM
A form of ancestor worship. No nger fashionable.

CLEAR WARHEADS
Can be delivered in pickup trucks id small motorboats.

Lifeblood of freedom. (See CAR-, DENTIST)

UTRAGE (MORAL)
Noble passion. Obligatory when hentioning Saddam Hussein or the merican public school.

AX AMERICANA
Military march played at White louse banquets.

ENTAGON (THE)
Temple of wisdom.

HILANTHROPIST
Tasteless word. Substitute "philnthropist" or "champion of the eople." (See GREED)

OOR (THE)
They lack discipline. Pointless to give them money because they don't nderstand Alan Greenspan. Best eft to the care of good Samaritans.

ROSPERITY
Healthy and invigorating program f fiscal austerity. Teaches a sober respect for the value of money.

RULING CLASS
Doesn't exist. A conspiracy theory trumped up by alienated New York intellectuals.

USSIA
Owned and operated by gangsters. A menace only to itself.

SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI
An Italian furrier.

SELFISHNESS
A virtue when encountered among the affluent; another proof of bad character when met with in plumbers and building contractors.

SEXY
An insult when said of a woman. Properly used to describe automobiles or restaurants.

TAIWAN
Bulwark of freedom in the western Pacific. Must be defended at all costs. Probable point of origin of World War III.

TAXES
Calamities of nature. Comparable to forest fires or bubonic plague.

TECHNOLOGY
Give computers to your children and you guarantee them an income of $300,000 a year before they reach the age of thirty.

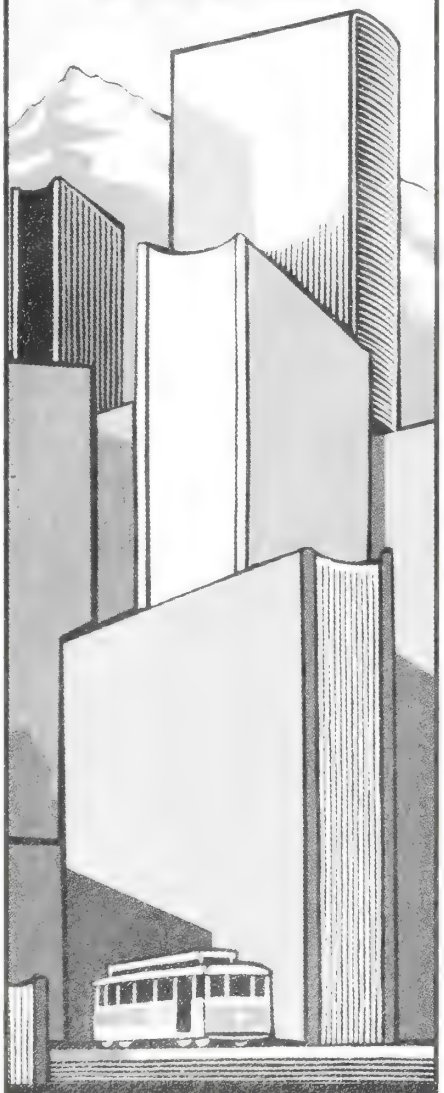
TERRORISTS
All come from wealthy families.

TITANIC (THE)
Famous ship. Ignorant people compare it to the global economy.

UNEMPLOYMENT
Blessing in disguise. Quote Voltaire: "The comfort of the rich rests upon an abundant supply of the poor."

WASHINGTON
Restored to a state of grace. When Bill Clinton was President the city attracted a gang of thieves and a carnival of whores. The undesirable element drifted south or died of drink soon after President Bush's appointment to the White House. The decent citizens who remain attend quietly to the building of churches and the development of nuclear weapons.

WORLD'S UNHAPPINESS (THE)
The world's own fault. ■

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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of pages of documents related to the Iran-Contra investigation that were still sealed : 4,000

Estimated number of Americans who listen to Oliver North's weekly radio show : 2,000,000

Ratio of the number of pardons granted by President Clinton to the number granted by President Reagan : 1:2

Ratio of the number granted by President Reagan to the number granted by President Eisenhower : 1:3

Years before being nominated as South Carolina's U.S. attorney in January that Strom Thurmond's son graduated law school : 5

Average years of legal experience that a current state's U.S. attorney acquired before taking the job : 18

Number of search warrants filed to discover AOL subscribers' identities in 1998 and 2000, respectively : 171, 390

Average percentage by which a Wall Street analyst's high-tech-earnings forecast in early 1999 was incorrect : 44

Average percentage by which an amateur stock website's forecast was incorrect : 21

Chance that a page in the middle-school textbook *Science Insights* contains a serious factual error : 1 in 10

Percentage of Americans who believe that "following your own conscience" is a mark of a strong character : 97

Percentage who believe that "obeying those in positions of authority" is : 92

Percentage of TV investigative reporters and editors who say that an advertiser has tried to kill one of their stories : 60

Chance that a page in this year's February/March issue of *Bride*'s magazine had editorial content on it : 1 in 7

Estimated percentage of *Maxim* readers who live with their parents : 22

Average age at which an American believes his or her physical attractiveness peaks : 38

Percentage of U.S. adults who say they are at least "somewhat satisfied" with their physical appearance : 88

Percentage of U.S. adults who have undergone cosmetic surgery who say this : 70

Length, in millimeters, of an I.D. microchip that Singapore now implants in the necks of all imported dogs : 13

Minimum number of Las Vegas casinos that use face-recognition technology to identify known card cheats : 25

Percentage of total U.S. electrical consumption accounted for by commercial lighting : 11

Percentage of a U.S. home's electrical consumption accounted for by appliances that are switched off : 5

Projected percentage by which the amount of electricity produced by U.S. wind turbines will change this year : +100

Factor by which the cost of China's Three Gorges Dam is expected to exceed its original $4.5 billion budget : 16

Estimated number of people who will be displaced by the dam's construction : 1,900,000

Percentage of the victims of politically motivated murders in Barrancabermeja, Colombia, last year who were civilians : 90

Number of politically motivated murders there last year, per 100,000 residents : 270

Number of murders in New York City last year, per 100,000 residents : 9

Percentage of local U.S. police departments that maintain a SWAT team : 77

Amount Houston reimbursed its mayor in January for a course he took in public speaking : $2,900

Compensation awarded a 30-year-old Australian in February for corporal punishment he suffered in high school : $1,500,000

Fine that Israel imposed on a Jewish settler in January for clubbing an 11-year-old Palestinian boy to death : $17,500

Months of community service to which he was also sentenced : 6

Distance from Auschwitz, in miles, of a camp tannery in which an investor group proposed opening a disco in 1999 : 2

Months after the plan was shelved due to protest that another was approved, allowing a disco to open there last August : 4

Number of visitors since 1999 to a Lithuanian theme park depicting life in a Stalinist gulag : 1,000,000

Number of pairs of Imelda Marcos's shoes on display in the Philippines' new shoe museum : 200

Estimated number of "crush films" involving live rodents and high-heeled women seized from a New York man in 1999 : 70

Hours of community service at an animal shelter to which he was sentenced last December : 280

Days after a rare turtle died in Miami last spring that a local aquarium staff member made it into a soup : 1

Figures on Ebay, [illegible] available on request, [illegible] Marsh [illegible] Report [illegible] pp. 75
[illegible]

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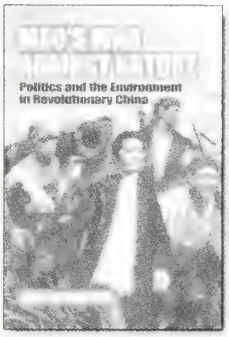
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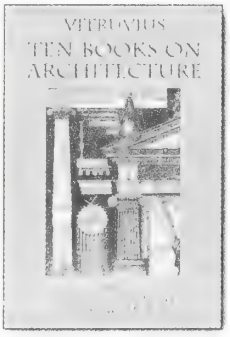
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READINGS

[Essay]

WHAT SWEETNESS WAS

From The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World, *by Michael Pollan, to be published this month by Random House. Pollan's article "Opium Made Easy" appeared in the April 1997 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

In the summer of 1806, John Chapman, already well known to people in Ohio by his nickname, Johnny Appleseed, was spotted floating down the Ohio in a canoe heaped with apple seeds. He was on his way to Marietta, where the Muskingum River pokes a big hole into the Ohio's northern bank pointing straight into the heart of the Northwest Territory. Chapman's plan was to plant a tree nursery along one of that river's as-yet-unsettled tributaries, which drain the fertile, thickly forested hills of central Ohio as far north as Mansfield. In all likelihood, Chapman was coming from Allegheny County in western Pennsylvania, to which he returned each year to collect apple seeds, separating them out from the fragrant mounds of pomace that rose by the back door of every cider mill. A single bushel of apple seeds would have been enough to plant more than 300,000 trees. There's no way of telling how many bushels of seed Chapman had with him that day, but it's safe to say his canoe was bearing several whole orchards into the wilderness.

If a man had the temperament for it and didn't care about starting a family or putting down roots, selling apple trees along the shifting edge of the frontier was not a bad little business. Apples were precious on the frontier, and Chapman, who made a habit of getting out just ahead of the settlers moving west, could be sure of a strong demand for his seedlings, even if most of them would yield nothing but "spitters." Because apples don't "come true" from seed, every apple grown from a seed yields a completely new variety, likely to be neither beautiful nor tasty. For apples to eat, you must plant trees grafted from known varieties, which are expensive. Seedling apples are good for making cider, though.

John Chapman was selling, cheaply, something everybody wanted—something, in fact, everybody in Ohio needed by law. A land grant in the Northwest Territory specifically required a settler to "set out at least fifty apple or pear trees" as a condition of his deed. The purpose of the rule was to dampen real-estate speculation by encouraging homesteaders to put down roots. Since a standard apple tree normally took ten years to fruit, an orchard was a mark of lasting settlement.

That's one reason planting an orchard became one of the earliest ceremonies of settlement on the American frontier; the other was the apples themselves. It takes a leap of the historical imagination to appreciate just how much the apple meant to people living 200 years ago. By comparison, the apple in our eye is a fairly inconsequential thing—a popular fruit (second only to the banana) but nothing

we can't imagine living without. It is much harder for us to imagine living without the experience of sweetness, however, and sweetness, in the widest, oldest sense, is what the apple offered an American in Chapman's time, the desire it helped to gratify.

Sugar was a rarity in eighteenth-century America. Even after cane plantations were established in the Caribbean, it remained a luxury good beyond the reach of most Americans. (Later on, cane sugar became so closely identified with the slave trade that many Americans avoided buying it on principle.) Before the English arrived and for some time after, there were no honeybees in North America and therefore no honey; for a sweetener, Indians in the north had relied on maple sugar instead. It wasn't until late in the nineteenth century that sugar became plentiful and cheap enough to enter and alter the lives of very many Americans (and most of them lived on the Eastern Seaboard); before then the sensation of sweetness for most people came chiefly from the flesh of fruit. And in America that usually meant the apple.

Sweetness is a desire that starts on the tongue with the sense of taste, but it doesn't end there. Or at least it didn't end there, back when the experience of sweetness was so special that the word served as a metaphor for a certain kind of perfection. When writers like Jonathan Swift and Matthew Arnold used the expression "sweetness and light" to name their highest ideal (Swift called them "the two noblest of things"; Arnold, the ultimate aim of civilization), they were drawing on a sense of the word "sweetness" going back to classical times, a sense that has largely been lost to us. The best land was said to be sweet; so was the most pleasing sound, the most persuasive talk, the loveliest views, the most refined people, and the choicest part of any whole — when Shakespeare calls spring the "sweet o' the year." Lent by the tongue to all the other sense organs, "sweet," in the somewhat archaic definition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is that which "affords enjoyment or gratifies desire." The word "sweetness" denoted a reality commensurate with human desire at its most fulfilled.

Since then sweetness has lost much of its power and become slightly, well, saccharine. Who now would think of sweetness as a "noble" quality? At some point during the nineteenth century, a hint of insincerity began to trail the word through literature, and in our time it's usually shadowed by either irony or sentimentality. Overuse probably helped to cheapen the word's power on the tongue, but I think the advent of cheap sugar in Europe, and perhaps especially cane sugar produced by slaves, is what did most to discount sweetness, both as an experience and as a metaphor. (The final insult came with the invention of synthetic sweeteners.) Both the experience and the metaphor seem to me worth recovering, if for no other reason than to appreciate the apple's former power.

Anthropologists have found that cultures vary enormously in their liking for bitter, sour, and salty flavors, but a taste for sweetness appears to be universal. This goes for many animals too, which shouldn't be surprising, since sugar is the form in which nature stores food energy. As with most mammals, our first taste of sweetness comes with our mother's milk. It could be that we acquire a taste for it at the breast, or we may be born with an instinct for sweet things that makes us desire mother's milk.

Either way, sweetness has proved to be a strong force in evolution. By encasing their seeds in sugary and nutritious flesh, fruiting plants such as the apple hit on an ingenious way of exploiting the mammalian sweet tooth: in exchange for fructose, the animals provide the seeds with transportation, allowing the plant to expand its range. As parties to this grand coevolutionary bargain, animals with the strongest predilection for sweetness and plants offering the biggest, sweetest fruits prospered together and multiplied, evolving into the species we see, and are, today.

As a precaution, the plants took certain steps to protect their seeds from the avidity of their partners: they held off on developing sweetness and color until the seeds had matured completely (before then fruits tend to be inconspicuously green and unpalatable), and in some cases (like the apple's), the plants developed poisons in their seeds to ensure that only the sweet flesh is consumed. Those lustrous deep brown seeds in the center of an apple contain a small quantity of cyanide; they're also almost indescribably bitter.

Desire, then, is built into the very nature and purpose of fruit, and so, quite often, is a kind of taboo. The vegetable kingdom's lack of glamour by comparison (who ever heard of a forbidden vegetable?) can be laid to the fact that a vegetable's reproductive strategy doesn't turn on turning animals on.

The blandishments of sugar are what got the apple out of the forests of Kazakhstan, where it seems to have originated, and where you can still find wild apple trees growing to a height of sixty feet and throwing off each fall a



Flight Into Egypt, *by Lewis Rodack. Visitors peering through a hole in the wall between the Apple Orchard and the Main Museum of New Netherland Orchard.*

cornucopia of fruits ranging in size from marbles to softballs, in color from yellow and green to red and purple. The silk route passes through these forests, and travelers on it would have picked the biggest and tastiest of these fruits to take on their journey west, toward Europe. From there the apple traveled with the Puritans to the shores of North America, and eventually found its way into John Chapman's boat. But the longstanding appeal of apples to humans (and perhaps especially to American humans) probably owes to their figurative as well as literal sweetness. The earliest settlers lighting out from places like Marietta wanted apple trees nearby because they were one of the comforts of home. Since the time of the New England Puritans, apples have symbolized, and contributed to, a settled and productive landscape. In the eyes of a European, fruit trees were part and parcel of a sweet landscape, along with clean water, tillable land, and black soil. To call land "sweet" was a way of saying it answered our desires.

The fact that the apple was generally believed to be the fateful tree in the Garden of Eden might also have commended it to a religious people who believed America promised a second Eden. In fact, the Bible never names "the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden," and that part of the world is too hot for apples, but at least since the Middle Ages northern Europeans have assumed that the forbidden fruit was an apple. (Some scholars think it was a pomegranate.) Like a botanical Zelig, the apple has wormed its way into our image of Eden through the brushwork of Dürer and Cranach and countless others. After their pictures, re-creating a promised land anywhere in the New World without an apple tree would have been unthinkable.

Especially to a Protestant. There was an old tradition in northern Europe linking the grape, which flourished all through Latin Christendom, with the corruptions of the Catholic Church while casting the apple as the wholesome fruit of Protestantism. Wine

figured in the Eucharist; also, the Old Testament warned against the temptations of the grape. But the Bible didn't have a bad word to say about the apple or even the strong drink that could be made from it. Even the most God-fearing Puritan could persuade himself that cider had been given a theological free pass.

"The desire of the Puritan, distant from help and struggling for bare existence, to add the Pippin to his slender list of comforts, and the sour 'syder' to cheer his heart and liver, must be considered a fortunate circumstance," a speaker told a meeting of the Massachusetts Horticultural Society in 1885. "Perhaps he inclined to cider . . . because it was nowhere spoken against in the scriptures." Whether this was really the reason or a rationale concocted after the fact, Americans were indeed strongly inclined to cider, an inclination that accounts for the high esteem in which the apple was held in the colonies and on the frontier. The fact is, there was hardly anything else to drink.

Alcohol is, of course, the other great beneficence of sugar: it is made by encouraging certain yeasts to dine on the sugars manufactured in plants. (Fermentation converts the glucose in plants into ethyl alcohol and carbon dioxide.) The sweetest fruit makes the strongest drink, and in the north, where grapes didn't do well, that was usually the apple. Up until Prohibition, an apple grown in America was far less likely to be eaten than to wind up in a barrel of cider. "Hard cider" is a twentieth-century term, redundant before then since virtually all cider was hard until modern refrigeration allowed people to keep sweet cider sweet.

Corn liquor, or "white lightning," preceded cider on the frontier by a few years, but after the apple trees began to bear fruit, cider—being safer, tastier, and much easier to make—became the alcoholic drink of choice. Just about the only reason to plant an orchard of the sort of seedling apples John Chapman had for sale would have been its intoxicating harvest of drink, available to anyone with a press and a barrel. Allowed to ferment for a few weeks, pressed apple juice yields a mildly alcoholic beverage with about half the strength of wine. For something stronger, the cider can then be distilled into brandy or simply frozen; the intensely alcoholic liquid that refuses to ice is called applejack. Hard cider frozen to thirty degrees below zero yields an applejack of 66 proof.

Virtually every homestead in America had an orchard from which thousands of gallons of cider were made every year. In rural areas cider took the place not only of wine and beer but of coffee and tea, juice, and even water. Indeed, in many places cider was consumed more freely than water, even by children, since it was arguably the healthier, because more sanitary, beverage. Cider became so indispensable to rural life that even those who railed against the evils of alcohol made an exception for cider, and the early prohibitionists succeeded mainly in switching drinkers over from grain to apple spirits. Eventually they would attack cider directly and launch a campaign to chop down apple trees, but up until the end of the nineteenth century cider continued to enjoy the theolog-

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ical exemption the Puritans had contrived for it.

It wasn't until the twentieth century that the apple acquired its reputation for wholesomeness—"an apple a day keeps the doctor away" was a marketing slogan dreamed up by growers concerned that temperance would cut into sales. In 1900 the horticulturist Liberty Hyde Bailey noted that "the eating of the apple (rather than the drinking of it) has come to be paramount," but for the two centuries before that, whenever an American extolled the virtues of the apple, whether it was John Winthrop or Thomas Jefferson, Henry Ward Beecher or John Chapman, their contemporaries would probably have smiled knowingly, hearing in their words a distinct Dionysian echo that we are apt to miss. When Emerson, for instance, wrote that "man would be more solitary, less friended, less supported, if the land yielded only the useful maize and potato, [and] withheld this ornamental and social fruit," his readers understood it was the support and sociability of alcohol he had in mind. Part of the reason John Chapman was welcome in every cabin in Ohio was because he was bringing the gift of drink. Since Prohibition we've been taught to think of Johnny Appleseed as a Walt Disney character, harmless and saccharine, when in fact the man was an American Dionysus.

At the turn of the century, around the same time the temperance movement was driving cider underground and cutting down the American cider orchard, refrigeration made possible a national market for apples. Growers got together and decided it would be wise to simplify that market by planting and promoting only a small handful of brand-name eating varieties. The market had no use for the immense variety of qualities the nineteenth-century apple had embodied. Now just two of these qualities counted: beauty and sweetness. Beauty in an apple meant a uniform redness, by and large; russeting now doomed even the tastiest apple.

As for sweetness, the complicated metaphorical resonance of that word had by now been flattened out, mainly by the easy availability of cheap sugar. What had been a complex desire had become a mere craving—a sweet tooth. Sweetness in an apple now meant sugariness, plain and simple. And in a culture of easy sweetness, apples now had to compete with every other kind of sugary snack food in the supermarket; even the touch of acid that gives the apple's sweetness some dimension fell out of favor. And so the Red and Golden Delicious, which are related only by the marketing genius of the Stark brothers (the nurserymen who named and trademarked them both) and their exceptional sweetness, came to dominate the vast, grafted monoculture that the American orchard has become. Even today apple breeders, locked in a kind of sweetness arms race with junk food, lean heavily on the genes of these two apples, which can be found in most of the popular apples developed in the last few years, including the Fuji and the Gala. Thousands of apple traits, and the genes that code those traits, have become obsolete as the great flowering of apple diversity that John Chapman's profligate planting of seeds helped sponsor has been winnowed down to the small handful of varieties that can pass through the needle's eye of our narrow conceptions of beauty and sweetness.

[Conundrum]

MEIN SO-CALLED KAMPF

From "They ain't alright just because they're white," an anonymous essay on the website of Blood & Honour/Combat 18, a group of British neo-Nazi skinheads

I've been involved in the so-called right wing for a number of years now, but when I step back and look at our so-called movement, especially more recently, I can't help wondering, "Why am I surrounded by so many misfits?"

The people who flocked to the National Socialist cause during the Third Reich were young idealists fighting for what they believed in: their race and their nation. Self-sacrifice was commonplace, and heroism was an everyday occurrence, both before the victory in 1933, when the Brownshirts fought the Reds, losing over 25,000 men in the streets alone, and afterward on the battlefields of World War II, when legions of men from every European nation were decimated time and time again in the Crusade for Europe. You just cannot compare these men with the dregs that call themselves right-wingers today. National Socialists then were the elite of our race, the cream of European youth. Most of the so-called right-wingers around today wouldn't have been fit to dig the latrine pits for the Waffen SS, yet they claim to represent the White race and declare themselves to be the so-called vanguard.



Conspirators, circa 1955, by Ethan Benjamin, after a Hall Bartlett photograph at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Why is there such a difference? I hear you ask. The problem now is that since the war, pro-White groups have been desperate for the numbers and will accept absolutely anyone just because they're White and call themselves racists. It doesn't matter what sort of lowlife they are as long as they are "our way." Quite simply, the Nationalist organizations that exist at the moment will accept anyone. The only condition of membership they seem to have is the ability to pay an annual subscription.

Obviously not everyone in the so-called right wing falls short of the high standards of the past: there are people out there who believe in our cause and are willing to stand up and fight for it. But let's take a look at some of the "problem cases" who are attracted to movements like ours, so you will be able to recognize them and then deal with them effectively.

1) The cowards: unfortunately these make up the bulk of the "right wing." Blokes who are nothing by themselves join up to be part of a gang, give it the right large one when they are at a Nationalist event, sticking the boot in when the numbers are on our side, but in reality are the sort of blokes who would watch a couple of spades push in front of them in a queue and do nothing about it, just look away. You all know the sort; without the beer for "Dutch courage" they're nothing.

2) The inadequates and losers: again the "right" is full of these types. They join because no one else will have them. They don't fit into any mainstream groups, and so they turn to the groups that accept anyone—the "right wing"—where they have instant friends and drinking buddies.

3) Faggots: because of the nature of the movement, which is made up of a lot of young blokes, queers tend to be attracted to it for deviant reasons. Some of these perverts will claim to be racist, but don't be fooled by this: they are nothing more than subhuman degenerates. Most of the faggots who worm their way into Nationalist organizations often find themselves being very quickly booted out—quite literally.

4) Passing trade: these are people who sud-

denly appear in the movement out of nowhere, have a short burst of activism, and then disappear as quickly as they arrived. These people may just be looking for a new experience—something different from the mundanity of their everyday lives—or they may be among us for more sinister purposes. Whatever the reason, they are a complete waste of space and should never be trusted.

5) The sickos and weirdos: these are the sort of freaks who believe in the Hitler=Evil equation that is spread by the media. These types are usually involved in Satanism, cults, pedophilia, you name it. Luckily, these people are very few in number but always prove to be the most embarrassing when they are exposed in the press, and we are all then tarred with the same brush.

These people do not belong among us; if they hadn't infiltrated the "right wing" they would probably be in some sort of cult. Our enemies love deviants such as these (often because they share the same interests) and will often encourage them to join us.

6) Drunks: mentally, these people are among the weakest specimens of humanity. They are in their element in the "right wing," because most of it is just a big drinking club.

So there it is: you may not want to hear it, but it's true. The "right wing" accepts anyone and everyone—it has NO standards. We set ourselves up as though we were better than everyone else and talk about the general population as though they were all scum. Well, the truth is that, percentage wise, we probably have far more scumbags in our midst than exist in the so-called non-racist general population.

The "right wing" has a choice to make: either it cleans up its act and introduces some standards to ensure the quality of its recruits, or it carries on being a freak show for the liberals to laugh at on the TV. Personally, I don't want it to be the latter and I doubt if you do. It's up to all you decent activists out there to make a stand and help clean up the movement. If that means a significant drop in numbers then so be it. It is far better to have a small but hard core of decent, clean-living, committed activists than a sprawling membership of inadequates.

We at Blood & Honour/Combat 18 firmly believe that the way to victory is through the quality rather than the quantity of our active supporters. We have no room in our ranks for people from any of the above categories. We will accept only those people whose lifestyles, commitment, idealism, and unrelenting activism make them worthy of being called National Socialists.

[Case Study]

JUNG M.C.

From "Rap Therapy: A Culturally Sensitive Approach to Psychotherapy with Young African American Men," by Dr. Elligan, which appeared in the Winter 2000 issue of the Journal of African American Men. *Elligan is a clinical psychologist at the Boston Center for Multicultural Training in Psychology.*

One of the most significant influences on the social development of young African American men is rap music. Reports indicate that 97 percent of Black youth like rap music and more than 50 percent buy at least one rap CD a month. Rap music's appeal to young African American men has been acknowledged and integrated into a wide variety of agendas. Considering the ubiquitous presence of rap, then, psychotherapists who work with young African American men should become familiar with constructive ways to utilize it in the interest of treatment.

Rap Therapy is sensitive to both cultural and developmental issues of young African American men and is easily integrated into a cognitive behavioral model of treatment. Rap Therapy neither endorses nor admonishes rap music's presence and influence. For the Rap Therapist, rap music is a tool that can be utilized in the mental health treatment of young African American men.

A good example of the application of Rap Therapy involves a young African American man, AB, whose chief difficulties were in the areas of grief work and anger management. AB lives in a housing project in Boston with his mother and two younger brothers. AB's father was murdered one month after being released from a six-year prison sentence for possession with intent to distribute illicit drugs. One week after his death AB and his brother returned to school. During their first week back, AB got into a fight with another classmate and was suspended for three days.

AB is currently seen by the clinician for Rap Therapy at least once a week. During the first two visits, the clinician was able to determine that AB's favorite rap artist was the Notorious B.I.G., and his favorite CD, *Life After Death*. AB said that he remembered the lyrics to most of the songs on the CD. He would listen to the CD while at home and reported watching videos on several cable-television channels.

The clinician had AB educate him about the Notorious B.I.G. while they played card

games. AB was unable to speak about the loss of his father, and his response to any questions about the death was limited to, "I don't care."

AB and the clinician would also discuss his difficulty with anger management. When asked why he frequently argued with his teacher, he responded, "Because I hate that stupid bitch." When asked why he didn't get along with some classmates, he responded, "If a nigga bothers me, I gotta bubble his lip," or, "I don't take no shit from nobody; I'm a No Limit Soldier." (No Limit is the recording label for Master P, another rap artist.)

The clinician asked AB if he wrote any rap music of his own. AB immediately reached into his book bag and pulled out a folder with images of rap graffiti and his own rap lyrics. He shared the contents of one of his raps entitled "Getto Do":

Your got damn parents are a trip
The streets got your baby because you are full of that bullshit
You tell your kids that drugs would fuck their health
And your doing it your got damn self
Well I wouldn't blame it all on you
You stupid ass teachers can suck my dick too
I walk around and say:
Fuck school, fuck curfew, fuck homework, and motherfuck the cops
I never walk down the block without my gun cocked
Todays special is getto do
Todays special is getto do

Following AB's reciting of "Getto Do" the clinician praised AB for being such a creative writer. The praise prompted further readings of other raps with similar content, which were also praised. The following week the clinician asked AB if he'd ever written a rap about his father's death. He responded by saying, "Man, I can't write nothing like that." He was then asked if he ever wrote a rap to his mother, and he replied, "No." The clinician then challenged AB to attempt to write a rap about one of his parents. He agreed to try but was unable to produce anything. The clinician then made AB an offer, "If you write a rap to one of your parents, I'll write one to mine." AB agreed to these conditions.

The clinician wrote the following excerpt:

Mom,
Oh, her the one,
The one responsible for it all.
The one that started it all
The one who gave it all
Mom
Oh, her the one
The one who gave me love
The one who gave me a brother
The one who taught me to be a man.
That's my mother. I'm her fan.
She made me a strong Blackman.

Until the clinician modeled an alternative construct for rap music, the client was unable to write anything. Following the modeling and ongoing positive reinforcement by the clinician, AB was able to slowly produce the following rap, which he entitled "Motherly Love":

Dear mama I know me, CC, and DD
Are sending you a lot of drama
Remember we love you
So please don't think
The way we act means we don't want you
Mother, I know you are sad about our father's loss
But remember he could have made it a little bit better
Father, I know you loved him and you also cared
And now you have to shed tears for him I know you are hurt.
Mother Mother Say Motherly Love
Mother Mother Say Motherly Love
Mom even that you got no job you are still working hard
By not letting us slob
You are splitting food in half
Some for me, some for DD, and some for CC
If we are sick, we don't ring no bell saying waitress waitress
All we do is lay on the mattress
We love you, we just don't want you to stress
Remember I try my best to stay out of mess
Mother Mother Say Motherly Love
Mother Mother Say Motherly Love
Love Your Son

This narrative was the first time AB was able to speak about the death of his father. His mother later reported it was also the first time he told her he loved her without being prompted by her own comments of love. The rap written to AB's mother marked a significant cognitive restructuring from his previous rap songs.

Subsequently, the client was able to begin speaking with both his mother and the clinician about the loss of his father. Furthermore, the frequency of his outbursts in the classroom decreased. When difficulties with anger management arose, the clinician and client were able to discuss alternative methods of handling his aggressive impulses that were consistent with his writings in the rap:

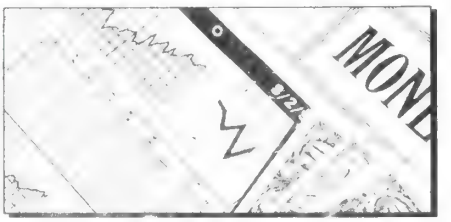
We love you, we just don't want you to stress
Remember I try my best to stay out of mess.

Over the course of one month, AB's anger-management skills improved substantially, and the focus of the Rap Therapy transitioned into helping him improve his compliance with doing school assignments and homework.

Rap Therapy is utilized as a culturally sensitive approach to psychological treatment of young African American men. Rap Therapy

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must be clinically indicated for both the client and therapist. If the therapist is unable to effectively meet the expectations of Rap Therapy, it is not clinically indicated for the therapist to attempt its application.

[Grievance]

HUNTER GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

The following letter was sent in January by Hunter S. Thompson to Holly Sorenson, senior vice president of production of the Shooting Gallery, a New York–based film company that optioned the rights for Thompson's novel The Rum Diary.

Dear Holly,

Okay, you lazy bitch, I'm getting tired of this fuckaround that you're doing with The Rum Diary.

We are not even spinning our wheels aggressively. It's like the whole Project got turned over to Zombies who live in cardboard boxes under the Hollywood Freeway . . . I seem to be the only person who's doing anything about getting this movie Made. I have rounded up Depp, Benecio del Toro, Brad Pitt, Nick Nolte & a fine screenwriter from England named Michael Thomas, who is a very smart boy & has so far been a pleasure to talk to & conspire with . . .

So there's yr. fucking Script & all you have to do now is act like a Professional & Pay him. What the hell do you think Making a Movie is all about? Nobody needs to hear any more of that Gibberish about yr. New Mercedes & yr. Ski Trips and how Hopelessly Broke the Shooting Gallery is . . . If you're that fucking Poor you should get out of the Movie Business. It is no place for Amateurs & Dilettantes who don't want to do anything but "take lunch" & Waste serious people's Time.

Fuck this. We have a good writer, we have the main parts cast & we have a very marketable movie that will not even be Hard to make . . .

And all you are is a goddamn Bystander, making stupid suggestions & jabbering now & then like some half-bright Kid with No Money & No Energy & no focus except on yr. own tits . . I'm Sick of hearing about Cuba & Japs & yr. Yo-yo partners who want to change the story because the violence makes them feel Queasy.

Shit on them. I'd much rather deal with a Live asshole than a Dead worm with No Light in his Eyes . . . If you people don't want to Do Anything with this movie, just cough up the Option & I'll talk to somebody else. The only thing You're going to get by quitting & curling up in a Fetal position is relentless Grief and Embarrassment. And the one thing you won't have is Fun.

If you don't Do Something QUICK you're going to Destroy a very good Idea. I'm in a mood to chop yr. fucking hands off.

R.S.V.P.
HUNTER

CC: Depp, Benecio, M. Thomas, Nolte, Shapiro

[Poem]

THE SHIPS

The following previously untranslated poem appears in Before Time Could Change Them: The Complete Poems of Constantine P. Cavafy, *published in April by Harcourt, Inc. Translated from the Greek by Theoharis Constantine Theoharis.*

From the Fantasy all the way to the Page. It is a difficult passage; it is a dangerous sea. The distance appears small at first sight, and all the same how long a journey it is, and how harmful sometimes for ships which attempt it.

The first danger springs from the extremely delicate nature of the goods which the ships convey. In the marketplaces of Fantasy, the majority and the best of things are constructed of fragile kinds of glass and diaphanous ceramics, and many break when they are unloaded on dry land. All of this damage is irreparable, because it is out of the question for the boat to turn back and retrieve similarly beautiful things. There is no possibility of the same shop that sold them being found. The marketplaces of Fantasy have grand and luxurious establishments, but no extended duration. Their commercial dealings are brief, they trade their goods swiftly, and liquidate immediately. It is very rare for a returning ship to find those same exporters with those same goods.

Another danger springs from the ships' provisions. They set out from the harbors of the opulent mainlands overloaded, and later when they find themselves on the open sea they are compelled to cast off some part of the load to save everything else. Consequently, practically no ship succeeds in bringing in intact as much



"Untitled (Cuba) [detail] 1995 [illegible] Courtesy [illegible] Gallery, New York" [illegible] published by Simon & Schuster

treasure as it received. The things cast off are obviously the goods of least value, but it sometimes happens that the sailors, in their great hurry, will make mistakes and will cast into the sea objects of great value.

If, on the other hand, it arrives at the bright paper harbor, sacrifices will again be newly required. The customs officers come and examine one sort of cargo and consider whether they should permit its unloading; they refuse to allow any other goods to be unloaded, and of the one sort they will in fact admit only a small quantity. The place has its laws. All commercial goods do not have free entry, and smuggling is strictly forbidden. The importing of wines is prohibited, because the mainlands from which the ships come make wines and spirits from grapes which a more clement temperature develops and ripens. The customs officials want none of those liquors. They are much too intoxicating. They are not suitable for all brains. Moreover, there exists a company in the place, which has a monopoly on wines. The color of that wine and the taste of that water have a thin body, and you can drink of these all day without getting at all dizzy. It is an old company. It enjoys great [illegible] and its shares are always rising in value.

But, on the other hand, let us be satisfied when the ships enter the harbor, even if that involves all those sacrifices. Because in the end, through [illegible] the cargo of shattered or cast-off pieces has been reduced during the length of the voyage. Additionally, the laws of the place and the regulated customs officers are, on the one hand, tyrannical about many things, but not entirely deterrent, and the greater part of the cargo is unloaded. On the other hand, the officers of the customs house are not infallible, and a variety of the prohibited goods gets through inside falsely labeled crates that have one thing written on them and something else inside them, [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

masts of ebony, with great flags unfurled white and red, filled with treasures, and none even come near the harbor, either because all the goods that they bring are prohibited, or because the harbor isn't deep enough to receive them. And they continue on their way. A favorable wind blows in their silken sails, the sun glazes the gleam of their golden bows, and they grow ever distant calmly and majestically, they grow always and forever more distant from us and from our narrow harbor.

Fortunately those ships are very rare. We scarcely see two or three throughout all our lives. And we forget them quickly. However bright the sight of them was, so rapid is their oblivion. And after a few years pass, if one day—while we are sitting sluggish looking at the light or listening to the silence—by chance the sound of those enthusiastic stanzas comes back into our minds, we don't remember them at first, and we torment our memory in order to recall where we heard them before. After much effort the old memory awakes and we recall that those stanzas are from the songs which the sailors sang, beautiful as the heroes of the *Iliad*, when the grand, the divine ships passed by and continued forward on their way—who knew where.

[Briefing]

FIGHTING THE MEDIA WAR

From notes taken by an anonymous participant in an October telephone briefing between Nachman Shai, Danny Yatom, and various Israeli officials. Nachman Shai, the participant quoted below, was an Israeli government spokesman; Danny Yatom was national security adviser under Ehud Barak.

Since the beginning of the crisis we have noted a bias in the United States media. The Palestinians have made great strides in influencing public opinion in America, and it is very disturbing to us. We were surprised by this success and very unprepared for it. We did not think there would be a media war over the Palestinian uprising. We assumed that the U.S. media would be on our side. This was a terrible miscalculation by us, and we paid heavily for it. It took us a few days to hit back, but I think that we have done so successfully.

Prior to the Sharm el-Sheikh summit I put together a committee of ten to twenty Israelis to plot our media strategy in the United States. And I told them: we are losing the media battle, and it is our job to put each of you on television to call the Palestinians liars. We have to win the media war to win the larger war. We designated one week for planning, rebutting the Palestinian position, and giving assignments to people. These were the top people—Itamar Rabinovich, Peres's top aides, former Rabin people, you name it—and we gave out assignments. Our purpose was to turn around American public opinion. We were very fortunate, because we aimed at putting our strategy into effect at Sharm el-Sheikh. And we succeeded, but like I said we were lucky. There were no Palestinian media people at Sharm el-Sheikh, and so we had the American media to ourselves. We gave interview after interview and they [the Palestinians] were very understaffed. We should not underestimate our victory. In many ways, the media war will decide who is wrong and who is right in this struggle, and we must convince people that we are right.

We have some major problems with the American media. There are many media outlets that understand our position, but there are others that are completely against us. We are especially upset at CNN. They have two Palestinian reporters, and they are very anti-Israeli. And we are putting real pressure on the heads of CNN to have them replaced with more objective, pro-Israeli reporters who are willing to tell our side of the story. You know the importance of the media in molding public opinion, so we need your cooperation. We need our friends in the United States to counter the Palestinian allegations. We need to get our story out.

[Renunciation]

JUST DESERTER

From an October 11, 2000, letter sent by Eyal Rozenberg, a corporal in the Israeli Defense Forces, to his commanding officer, Colonel Shaul Shahar. Since the onset of the most recent Intifada last September, thousands of Israeli soldiers have dodged mandatory military service. Rozenberg is currently awaiting trial in military court.

Colonel Shahar,

On December 6, 1998, I was conscripted into the Israeli army for a three-year period in accordance with the Law of Security Service.

I did not welcome the conscription. Although my moral resistance to the values and actions of the Israeli Defense Forces wasn't nearly as deep and resolved as that which I now harbor, I intuitively resented having to sacrifice three years of my life because of an or-

der from above. In spite of this, however, I did not consider, even for a moment, the option of objecting. All of my friends and schoolmates enlisted; every member of my family born in Israel had enlisted; and both my parents and the Israeli educational system had instilled in me the belief that conscription is to be accepted without question. I viewed working for the Israeli military as a service I owed society. I was also tempted by the various courses of service proposed to me as professional stepping-stones.

And at the bottom I arrived. The basic training period (Tironut) subjected me to a month of well-engineered behavioristic abuse, a via dolorosa that produces zombies with neither the will nor the ability to resist any order. A Tironut in the Israeli military is a scar that is painfully, if not impossibly, difficult to erase from one's soul.

Time crawled on, and after the training period I found myself in an uncommonly comfortable unit: out-of-uniform work with powerful computers developing software in an advanced and aesthetic programming environment. My assignment helped to alleviate the bitter aftertaste that basic training had left, and I resolved simply to make the time go by—get up in the morning, go to work, and go back to my apartment at the end of the day.

But the cognitive blow of the Tironut set in motion an ongoing examination of myself and my surroundings: an exploration of the nature of the Israeli Defense Forces, and of the social and political systems that hurl us into it. As time went by, I found myself beginning to doubt some of my most fundamental suppositions: the necessity of the Israeli military, the merit of my military service, and the truthfulness of the values of which the Israeli military boasts.

A military that slaughtered tens of thousands of Palestinians during 1948 and expelled or chased off hundreds of thousands—thus serving Israelis a state on a platter of foreign currency and local skulls; a military that assisted in the organization of failed terrorist attacks during Prime Minister Moshe Sharett's term [1953–55], in order to thwart the Israeli-Egyptian dialogue initiatives; a military that attacked, bombarded, and slaughtered both soldiers and civilians in Jordan, Egypt, and Syria in the first twenty years of the state's existence; a military that expelled over 130,000 Syrians from their native land of the Golan Heights in 1967 and continues the occupation of their territory to this date; a military that has held over a million Palestinians in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip under oppressive and violent occupation since 1967 and continues ceaselessly to abuse and butcher the local populace; a military whose occupation, attacks, and well-aimed bombardment (part of which utilize payloads designed specifically for mass murder) have killed tens of thousands of native Lebanese and Palestinians and have wounded over 300,000 people over the course of the last twenty years, all in the name of "protecting the settlements of northern Israel," a cause that has been proven by the events of May 2000 to have been achievable at any moment by means of unilateral withdrawal; a military that provides support for the construction of settlements in occupied territories and maintains them in the face of local popular resistance; a

[Accounting]

ROSEBUD . . .

From a panel discussion at a conference held in New York City last February on media and entertainment. The following exchange between television personality Charlie Rose and Rupert Murdoch, the media baron, was transcribed by Amy Wallace, a senior writer at Los Angeles Magazine. *Murdoch's News Corp. had been in negotiations to acquire DirecTV from its owner, General Motors.*

CHARLIE ROSE: If March 11 you'll be seventy.

RUPERT MURDOCH: Pretty soon.

ROSE: How do you feel about that?

MURDOCH: Pretty bad. I have lived for 613,000 hours. 201,000 of them were in childhood, youth, and thoroughly sort of inadequate education. That leaves 412,000. You take a third of that for sleep and rest. So I'm down to 275,000 hours. I take out a month for holidays, at least half a weekend, family time, evenings, etc., and you're down to at the very maximum a couple hundred thousand hours I've been at work. And then I go, What have I done? How much time have I wasted in endless meetings with no decisions? Industry conferences? Company conferences? Studying overlong reports? Yeah, I guess I've wasted at least half my life. So that gets me down to perhaps 100,000 useful hours. Pretty bad figures. So if I'm pretty healthy and have a normal life expectancy I'm a bit optimistic—I've got about another 175,000 hours to go, of which maybe I can spend 75,000 productively at work. All right? Or 70,000, say. So I've just got to see that each one of those hours is well spent. And hopefully it won't all be spent talking to General Motors.

military that [illegible] conscripts citizens into its service, jailing those who refuse to work for it; a military that wins every war while planting the seeds of the next one; a military that makes use of the labor of its citizens [illegible] business with questionable parties [illegible] positions of military knowledge, equipment, and services is even more questionable—in transactions of nearly unimaginable scale; a military whose officers are free to ignore even its own orders without fear of judicial action by their subordinates; a military that is all this, yet continues to call itself the "Defense Forces," claims to have kept the "purity of arms," and maintains the pretense of being a "people's army."

May no one be a part of it!

Why, then, have I stayed in the Israeli military, in your unit, until now? Since my conscription, this question has arisen with increasing frequency. And until now, I have answered halfheartedly: "The military is not all bad," I told myself. "You are in Tel Aviv, in a 'good' unit, well fed, and even able to participate in sociopolitical activity in your after-hours. Why rock the boat? Why would you need the arrests, the trials, the punishment, the harassment? And if you go back home to Haifa, what will become of the connections you've established here? After all, before you were conscripted your activism was minor in comparison with your activity within the military. In fact, maybe you're doing more good than harm in your present state? And besides, the parents will give you hell!"

I had thought that my activities outside the military, within the framework of Hadash (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality) and the Green organizations, coupled with my request not to rise in rank, were excuse enough for the rest of my actions. But it is not so.

In a September meeting, my commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Efi Yerushalmi, said something that has stayed with me. He said that the principle that must guide me is whether, at the end of the day, when I look at my face in the mirror, I can accept what I see.

As I continue working for you while you slaughter a conquered people, I am living a lie, and this he will reflect upon me from that mirror.

I may not be a person of strong character, but I [illegible] work for the Israeli military, and that I will not be deterred by bars, locks, harassment, physical abuse, or any other sanction I may be facing.

I hereby declare my refusal to serve in the Israeli Defense Forces in any fashion, in any position, in any unit, in any rank, at any time, and under any condition, effective immediately.

Sincerely,

[illegible]

[Essay]

MY MILK

From a diary by Anne Enright that appeared in the October 5 London Review of Books. *Enright is the author, most recently, of the novel* What Are You Like?

The milk surprises me. It does not disgust me as much as I thought it would, unless it is not fresh. It is disturbing that a piece of you should decay so quickly. I don't think Freud ever discussed lactation, but the distinction between "good" and "bad" bodily products here is very fine. Women leak so much. Perhaps this is why we clean—which is to say that a man who cleans is always "anal," and a woman who cleans is just a woman.

There certainly is a lot of it, and it gets everywhere, and the laundry is a fright. But what fun to be granted a new bodily function so late in life—as if you woke up one morning and could play the piano. From day to day the child is heavier in your arms: she plumps up from wrist to ankle, she has dimples where her knuckles were, she has fat on her toes. I thought we might trade weight, pound for pound, but she is gaining more than I am losing. I am faced with strange and difficult calculations—the weight of the groceries in a bag versus the weight of her diapers in a bag. Or: my weight, plus a pint of water, minus four ounces of milk, versus her weight, plus four ounces, divided by yesterday. When I was at school, a big-chested friend put her breasts on the scales and found that they weighed two pounds each. I don't know how she did it, but I still think that she was wrong. Heavier. Much heavier.

It is pleasant when a part of your body makes sense, after many years. A man can fancy your backside, but you still get to sit on it. Breasts, on the other hand, were always just there. Even so, the anxiety of pregnancy is the anxiety of puberty all over again. I feel that I have done this before somehow, that I have passed that exam; I am thirty-seven. I do not believe people when they say these things will be wonderful, that they are "meant." I am suspicious of the gleam in women's eyes, that pack of believers, and listen instead to a friend who breast-fed her children until they were fourteen and a half, and who now says, "They're like ticks."

So I feed the child because I should, and resign myself to staying home. I never liked being around nursing women—there was always too much love, too much need in the room. I also suspected it to be sexually gratifying. For whom? Oh, for everyone: for the mother, the child, the father, the



"Prison Chapel Mural, View #2" by [illegible] is on view at the Southeast Museum of Photography in Daytona Beach, Florida.

father-in-law. Everyone's voice that little bit nervy, as though it weren't happening; everyone taking pleasure in a pery-lite, middle-class sort of way. I thought I sensed a distaste in the midwives, a couple of months ago, who were obliged by hospital and government policy to prod the child and pinch my nipple, though perhaps—let's face it—not quite that hard. It is probably easier for men, who like breasts in general, but I have always found them mildly disgusting, at least up close. Even the word "breast" is difficult.

So let's call it "nursing" and let's be discreet—it's still the best way I know to clear a room. My breast (left or right, whichever is at issue) is not the problem, the "problem" is the noise. Sometimes the child drinks as simply as from a cup, other times she snorts and gulps, half-drowns, sputters and gasps, then she squawks a bit, and starts all over again. This may be an iconized activity made sacred by some and disgusting by others, but it is first and foremost a meal. It is only occasionally serene. It also takes a long time. I do smile at her and coo a bit, but I also read a lot (she will hate books), talk, or type (this, for example). Afterward she throws up. People stare at the whiteness of it, as I did at first. Look. Milk.

"It was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled me." The nineteenth century took its breasts very seriously, or so I suspect—I can't really get into a library to check. I am thinking of those references I found particularly exciting or unsettling as a child. The heroes of *King Solomon's Mines*, for example, as

they toil up Sheba's left Breast (a mountain), [illegible]. The chapter is called "Water! Water!" and comes from a time when you were allowed to be so obvious it hurt. "Heavens, how we did drink!" These extinct volcanoes are "inexpressibly solemn and overpowering." In the attempt to describe their "extraordinary grandeur and beauty . . . language seems to fail" him, despite which the narrator staggers on until "as though to veil the majestic sight from our curious eyes, strange mists and clouds gathered and increased around them, till presently we could only trace their pure and gigantic outline swelling ghostlike through the fleecy envelope." In a desperate drama of hunger and satiation our heroes climb through lava and snow up to the hillock of the enormous, freezing nipple. There they find a cave, occupied by a dead man (What?! What?!), and in this cave one of their party also dies: Ventvögel, a "Hottentot" whose "snubnose" had enabled him, when still alive, to sniff out water (we don't want to know).

So far, so infantile. I watch the child's drama at the breast and, when I am not reading, typing, or talking, cheer her along. She wakes with a shout in the middle of the night, and I wonder at her dreams: there is a dead man in a cave, perhaps, somewhere about my person. Oh dear. When did it all get so serious? I turn to Swift for the comedy, as opposed to tragedy, of scale, but Gulliver perched on a Brobdingnagian nipple turns out, on rereading, to be part of a great disgustfest about giant women pissing. None of this seems *true* to me. I have no use for the child's disgust, as she has no use for mine. I am besotted with a being who is, at this stage, just a set of emotions arranged around a gut. Who is just a shitter, who is just a soul.

Are all mothers Manichaeans? This is one of the hundreds of stupid questions that have never been asked about motherhood. What I am interested in is not the drama of being a child but this new drama of being a mother (yes, there are cannibals in my dreams. Yes) about which so little has been written. Can a mother not hold a pen? Or is it just the fact that we are all children when we write?

I venture into Books Upstairs in Dublin, to find a poem by Eavan Boland. The child is in the stroller and I am inordinately, sadly proud [illegible] that she is calm. We negotiate the steps, we knock over some books. The child does a spectacular crap in the silence of the shop, in front of the section marked "Philosophy." I say: "Oh, look at all the books. Oh, *look* at all the books," because I believe in talking to her, and I don't know what else to say.

The poem is called "Night Feed" and is beautifully measured and very satisfying: "A silt of milk./The last suck./And now your eyes are open,/Birth-coloured and offended." But the poet chooses a bottle, not a breast, placing the poem in the bland modernity of the suburbs. I grew up in those suburbs. I know what we were running away from. Because the unpalatable fact is, the Ireland of my childhood had the closest thing to a cow-cult outside of India. When I was eleven, I won a Kodak Instamatic camera in "The Milk Competition," a major annual event, when every schoolchild in the country had to write an essay called "The Story of Milk." I can still remember the arrival of the Charolais that was the beginning of Ireland's love affair with Europe. The most exciting thing about economic union, for my farming relatives, was not the government grants but this bug-eyed, nougat-colored breed of bull whose semen could be used in beef or dairy herds—as good, if you will pardon the phrase, for meat as for milk. It was a romantic animal, as hopeful as the moon shot. There were cufflinks made in the shape of the Charolais, and men wore them to mass and to the market. And the romance lingers on. A couple of years ago, a media personality of my acquaintance bought four of them, to match her curtains.

The country was awash with milk. Kitchens and bedrooms were hung with pictures of the Madonna and Child. After the arrival of infant formula in the 1950s, breast-feeding became more of a chosen, middle-class activity, but it was still common in the countryside and was everywhere practiced as a fairly optimistic form of contraception. Still, although it was general all over Ireland, breast-feeding was absolutely hidden. The closest the culture came to an image of actual nursing was in the icon of the Sacred Heart, endlessly offering his male breast, open and glowing, and crowned with thorns.

Actually, you know, breast-feeding hurts. Certainly, at first, it really fucking hurts. On the third night of her life, I was left with a human being the size of a cat and nothing to sustain her with but this *stub*. Madwomen apparently think that their babies are possessed. And they are. They look at you, possessed by their own astonishing selves. You say, where did that come from? You say, where did *you* come from? She is pure need—a need you never knew you had. And all you have to offer is this mute part of your body, that you are told will somehow start "expressing," as though it might start singing "Summertime." You feed your child, it seems, on hope alone. There is nothing to see. You do not believe the milk exists until she throws it back up, and when she does you want to cry. What is not quite yours as it leaves you is definitely yours as it comes back.

So there we were in the hospital dark, me









THE TRIUMPH OF EXPEDIENCE

How America lost the election to the courts

"The Court must take care to speak and act in ways that allow people to accept its decisions . . . as grounded truly in principle, not as compromises with social and political pressures . . ."

The Supreme Court issued that opinion in a case upholding its 1973 decision in *Roe* v. *Wade*, which recognized abortion as a constitutional right. Condemned at the time as shamelessly partisan, *Roe* v. *Wade* provoked America's religious conservatives to furious political objection, which, seven years later, helped to carry Ronald Reagan into the White House. Last December 9, in another controversial ruling, the High Court closed off a recount of the Florida presidential vote, thereby delivering the presidency to a man politically aligned with the five justices who wrote the opinion. The Court's decision in *Bush* v. *Gore* raises the question as to whether it might prompt a new groundswell of angry objection that could serve the Democrats in the way that *Roe* v. *Wade* served the Republicans. To determine the opinion's possible place in our politics and juridical canon, *Harper's Magazine* invited two of the country's most well-regarded legal scholars to discuss the subject over lunch in Chicago.

[illegible] debate took place before a live audience at the Standard Club in Chicago.

PAMELA S. KARLAN

is a professor of law at the Stanford University Law School and the coauthor, [illegible] of When Elections Go Bad: The Law of Democracy and the Presidential Election of 2000

RICHARD POSNER

is a judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit. He is also a senior lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School and the author of a number of books, including Breaking the Deadlock: The 2000 Election, the Constitution, and the Courts, *forthcoming from Princeton University Press.*

I. WAS THE DECISION *BUSH V. GORE* [illegible] OR THE BEGINNING OF ONE?

RICHARD POSNER: In November and early December, we were on our way to a constitutional crisis. We did still have a president in power and more than a month to the inauguration. But if the crisis had dragged on into January, when Congress was scheduled to meet to count electoral votes, and let's say there were then two slates of Florida electors, what was Congress supposed to do? There's no procedure in the Constitution for this, no deadlines, only an ambiguous statute (the Electoral Count Act), which is itself of dubious constitutionality. Would that have meant that the Supreme Court would have had to jump back into the act in January in order to determine the constitutionality of the process Congress had decided upon? That would have been a crisis.

PAMELA KARLAN: But there was a political process under way and the Supreme Court short-circuited it. The process might have been better if it just to [illegible] something that more or less patted the country's hand and said, There, there, don't worry, we're not in a crisis. There's going to be an orderly resolution of this in the Florida courts, and then the federal courts may have to get involved and Congress may have a role to play . . .

POSNER: Well, what's orderly about that?

KARLAN: Well, if they had taken the sort of Breyer-Souter position, I think there could have been an orderly resolution.

POSNER: That position was, with all due respect, ridiculous.

KARLAN: I don't think it was ridiculous at all. What Breyer and Souter said was: You can't have a process in which you're not counting the ballots using the same standard statewide. So if a uniform standard had been decided upon and a recount carried out, it would have been an orderly process.

POSNER: There was no time to do what Justices Souter and Breyer suggested, which was for the Florida Supreme Court to devise uniform, precise criteria for recounting, for the recount to be conducted, and for the results of the recount to be subjected to judicial review. By the time the process was completed, any reasonable deadline for Florida to have cast its electoral votes would have passed. That would have been a mess! The way people react to this business no doubt depends on how much they fear disorder and uncertainty. Myself, I just cannot see the reason for precipitating a constitutional crisis merely to fuss with a statistical tie that, given the inherent subjectivity involved in hand counting spoiled ballots, can never be untied. The Supreme Court spared us from that.

KARLAN: But maybe this is a case in which if the Court didn't step in, we would have watched a political process finally work things out. People talk about instability, but it's hard to think of a time in America when we were more stable and more capable of having a disputed election go into Congress than right now. America is in good shape—internationally and economically. The two parties weren't so far apart in the election. Plus, it would have been good for us to figure out what the political process should be to resolve this kind of tie, since this kind of statistical tie is quite likely to happen again in our lifetimes—especially as the parties get much better at figuring out where the marginal voter is and how to appeal to the very last vote one needs to harvest. If we don't work this out now, when will we?

POSNER: But we were close to a dangerous constitutional crisis. This may sound ridiculous, but I believe that it would have been very bad had the crisis remained unresolved at Christmas. The American people don't want to think of the country as being leaderless when what they want to be thinking about is Christmas. The longer it dragged on, the uglier it would have gotten. Politicians can be very ugly, and they'd only have gotten uglier as the sense of instability deepened. Do you know who the president would have been on January 20 if we'd had no resolution of the succession crisis by then?

KARLAN: After Clinton left office?

POSNER: Larry Summers.

KARLAN: The secretary of the treasury. Now that he's been named president of Harvard, maybe he would have viewed being temporary president of the United States as good training.

POSNER: Well, he was number four.

KARLAN: Madeleine Albright was number three but ineligible because she's foreign born.

POSNER: Numbers one and two, Dennis Hastert and Strom Thurmond, would have had to quit their jobs.

KARLAN: Because you can't be president and hold another office.

POSNER: Hastert wouldn't have wanted to quit the Speakership to be acting president for a few weeks. And Thurmond, if he had resigned, would have given the Democrats control of the Senate. So it's President Summers. To have the most powerful country in the world effectively leaderless is not a tolerable situation.

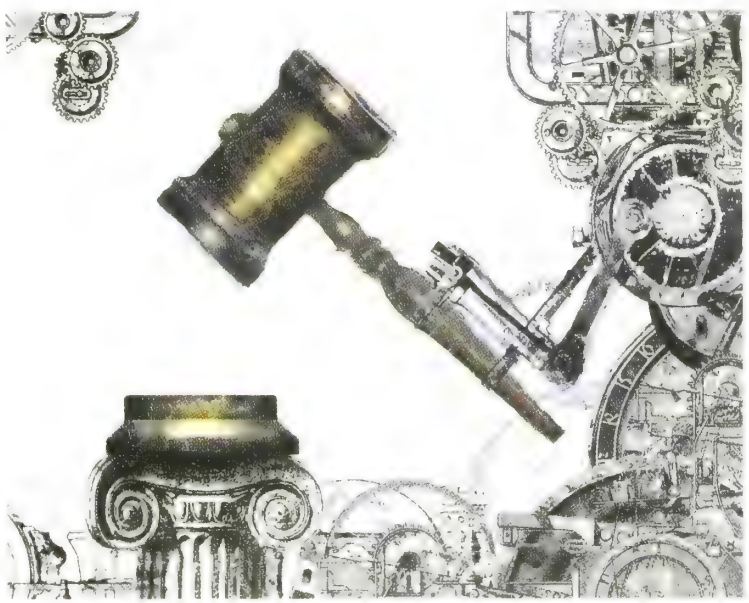
IF WHAT SHOULD'VE BEEN COUNTED?

POSNER: It's a legal question, and the answer depends on how a state's law reads. Florida's election code says that a candidate can protest the result of an election in a county and that the county canvassing board can, among other responsive measures, conduct a hand recount of a sampling of precincts picked by the protester. But what that sampling is looking for is an error in the *tabulation* of the vote, which was ruled to mean that something was wrong with the counting *machinery*. There's no reason to believe that the computers that counted punch-card ballots in Florida were defective. And I infer from this that Bush really did win Florida, by 930 votes.

KARLAN: Well, the definition of a recount depends, in the first place, on the voting technology. Florida, like most states, is very decentralized, with many different voting systems. One county still uses those old lever-style machines where the vote is tabulated in the back. A recount there means looking at each machine's tally one more time. But in a Florida county that still uses paper ballots, every count and recount involves human judgment. As a legal matter, Florida's recount system is very odd. First you have automatic recounts when elections are close. Then you are allowed a one-week protest phase before the vote is certified by the secretary of state. After that comes the contest phase, a legal proceeding in court that can result in ineligible votes being thrown out or a recount being ordered. But, given the variety of voting technologies in Florida, a recount could mean anything — from doing exactly what you did the first time to looking at every ballot and trying to figure out what the voter intended.

POSNER: If you look at the recount provisions of the Texas election code, you'll see a special provision about hand counting punch-card ballots. A dangling chad counts as a vote. If you can see light through it, it's a vote. If it's dimpled and the intention of the voter is clearly ascertainable, it's a vote. So there's little scope for discretionary judgment by the election officials. The Florida statute, in contrast, grants broad discretion both to the canvassing boards and to the secretary of state.

That's why it seems to me that the Florida election officials were acting within the scope



of their authority when they said, Yes, a lot of people's votes didn't get counted, but it had nothing to do with the vote tabulation, and we extend the statutory deadline for submission of final vote totals only for fraud or statutory violations, or an act of God like a hurricane, and so you're out of luck. It was a harsh judgment, probably influenced by the fact that these are Republicans, but that's the system Florida has set up.

KARLAN: Florida's election law is incredibly badly designed. Like Volusia County, which was one of the counties that did a manual recount. There was no tabulation error, but the canvassing board decided to do a manual recount, and they got it done before the certification deadline. Secretary of State Katherine Harris, who had said she wouldn't accept any manual re-

THE QUESTION IS, HOW SHOULD THE FLORIDA SUPREME COURT CONDUCT A REVIEW OF ELECTION PRACTICES? NOT WHETHER, AS ONE LAWSUIT CLAIMED, THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY PROCESS FOR JUDICIAL REVIEW AT ALL

counts, accepted that one. By her own argument, she should have thrown it out. So you have these overlapping discretions between the county canvassing boards and the secretary of state that resulted in the counties having the discretion to order recounts and Harris having the discretion not to accept them.

POSNER: I think it is true that a hand recount conducted by neutrals, if there *are* any neutrals in this business, would definitely have recovered some votes. For example, the fact that the chad is dangling is good evidence that you intended to vote for the candidate whose chad it is, provided no other chads for that office have been punched. And similarly, it was clear for whom the people who treated "write-in" as a verb rather than an adjective, and so both punched the ballot and wrote in the same person's name, were intending to vote.

KARLAN: You can't say they didn't feel strongly about their vote.

POSNER: Right, they were trying to emphasize their conviction. That was truly unambiguous. So if you had a hand recount conservatively limited to dangling chads and those unambiguous overvotes (double voting for the same person), that would be, I think, an objective recount. But no standard was ever actually laid down to guide the hand recounts. I don't think anyone knows what Volusia County's standard was. Broward County and Palm Beach County between them used at least four different methods, and I don't know what standard Miami-Dade County used.

[redacted]

KARLAN: Actually, under Florida law, *any* candidate can file a protest. Any voter can bring a contest lawsuit over an election for public office, and any taxpayer can bring a lawsuit in a referendum.

POSNER: Right, any candidate can protest. What confused matters was the butterfly ballot used in Palm Beach County. Now, the butterfly ballot would produce a perfectly clear, countable vote—no problem—if the voter punched the hole that corresponded to the candidate for whom the voter intended to vote for. There isn't any way in the world that you can correct that error. But in the first few hours of people's excitement and upset, this distinction between a spoiled ballot, from which a vote might be recovered, and a perfect-[redacted] the vote counted for the wrong candidate, was muddled. Later it was discovered that the punch-card technology—even though the tabulating machinery worked fine—produced an abnormal number of undervotes. Gore was, in any event, entitled to ask for the sample hand recount that I mentioned. Whether he should have done it as a matter of political civility, that's another question.

KARLAN: Remember what happened, though. By law Gore had to file county by county. And so he requested these four manual recounts, and George Bush immediately went into federal court—in a lawsuit that nobody pays any attention to now—to try to stop these legal manual recounts.

POSNER: Meanwhile, there was the November 14 deadline for the submission of the county vote totals.

KARLAN: Right. So then the counties filed a lawsuit against Katherine Harris in state court trying to force her to extend that deadline, because they realized they couldn't get—

POSNER: —finished, because these are large counties. There was an interim decision in which Florida Circuit Court Judge Terry Lewis very sensibly said that this was Harris's call. That's when the Gore camp got the Florida Supreme Court to step in on November 21 and reverse Lewis and extend the protest recount deadline to the twenty-sixth.

KARLAN: One of the things that kept happening in Florida is that everybody kept shooting from the hip without thinking very much about the ending. So Katherine Harris cornered herself by announcing, when she learned about the canvassing commission's decisions to do manual recounts—before she knew the circumstances leading to those decisions—that she wasn't going to count the results that came in after the certification deadline. This led to her being told, by Judge Lewis, that she was abusing her discretion. You can't start out by saying, I have no discretion, when the Florida statute gives you discretion. Then, later, when she exercised this discretion to do precisely what she had set out to do originally, it made the Florida Supreme Court suspicious of her motives.

POSNER: It might have been better if Harris had just said: In a presidential election, time is just too much of the essence to allow a recount to go on after the seven-day deadline has passed, given all the vagaries of hand recounting punch-card ballots. The Florida Supreme Court

never gave her the chance to articulate this opinion. On November 21 they could have said: You seem to be acting high handedly in your refusal to extend the deadline, but, you know, we'll give you twenty-four hours to give us an explanation.

KARLAN: Judge Lewis did give her that chance the first time around. When she said, I have no discretion unless there's an act of God, he said, No, you do have that discretion. Harris was boxed in not so much by the Florida Supreme Court as by her politics. What she should have said is, The reason I have to certify the election quickly here is because there is this end date out there—December 18, when the Electoral College meets—and the contest phase, when recounts can be ordered, has to be conducted before that date. But, of course, her political position was that these disputed votes shouldn't be counted even by a judge in the contest phase. So she didn't say the thing that, I think, was truest, which is, It's appropriate for me to use my discretion to pinch off the protest phase early, because otherwise the contest phase of Florida law can't work its way out. Why? Because she didn't want there to be a recount ever. So she didn't articulate her notion very persuasively, because to explain herself in detail would have set out a road map for how these ballots could get counted.

IV. WHEN DID WE JUMP THE CONSTITUTIONAL RAIL?

POSNER: I would say on November 21, the date of the decision by the Florida Supreme Court that the U.S. Supreme Court on December 4 sent back to the Florida court for reconsideration.

KARLAN: I agree that the Florida Supreme Court's November 21 opinion—which extended the deadline of the protest phase—is the first place where there's any federal claim whatsoever.

POSNER: That's right. It was in the December 4 opinion that the Supreme Court raised the question of conformity with Article 2, Section 1, Clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution. This says that a state shall appoint its presidential electors in the manner directed by the state legislature. The Florida legislature had established a procedure for appointing presidential electors—in this case, through a popular election followed by the possibility of protests and contests and so on. And what the Florida Supreme Court did, I think, beginning on November 21 and then continuing on December 8, was to rewrite this statute. The court swept aside the discretion that the statute vests in the secretary of state and in the local canvassing boards.

KARLAN: And there were other ways to decide the case without attracting the interest of the U.S. Supreme Court. Imagine, for example, that the Florida Supreme Court had said on November 21: Look, as a matter of Florida law, certification merely the beginning of the process of determining who won the election. We should/n't extend the certification phase, because all of the claims that are being made can be addressed in the contest phase, with legal arguments on the basis of which Florida courts may order a statewide recount. But they did the same thing the Gore people did: they put too much weight on the certification process and made it impossible to do the kind of recount that would have satisfied the higher courts.

POSNER: The U.S. Supreme Court ended up expressing two constitutional complaints about the decision of the Florida Supreme Court. First was denial of equal protection, which was the ground that a majority of the Supreme Court justices adopted, though it seems to me quite thin and unconvincing. And, second, was the "manner directed" clause of Article 2, which can be interpreted as a device for minimizing Electoral College chaos by vesting the power of determining a state's presidential electors in the state legislature—and not permitting the state judiciary (or the state executive) to usurp that power. And so it becomes very important to determine whether the Florida Supreme Court at every stage was conforming to the election code or was making up its own election code.

KARLAN: But if you were asked before this election, Do the Florida courts have any role in supervising recounts of presidential elections under Florida law? you would have said yes.

POSNER: I have no quarrel with that.

KARLAN: The question is, How should the Florida Supreme Court conduct that review? Not whether, as one lawsuit claimed, there should be any process for judicial review at all.

POSNER: Yes, that would be ridiculous.

KARLAN: So we're talking about the degree of judicial review. I think what they did on November 21 by extending the deadline was to set themselves up to jump the constitutional track later. Part of the reason that the Florida Supreme Court didn't come out in its December 8 opinion ordering the recount and say, Here's the standard you ought to apply in doing the recount, is because the U.S. Supreme Court had earlier said, in effect, If you say anything that isn't in the Florida statute already, you're violating Article 2 and you will be struck down. Had the Gore camp just allowed the contest phase to begin on time, the Florida Supreme Court could have said, There are enough ballots that haven't been properly counted, so we'll need a recount, and to ensure uniformity we interpret clear intent of the voter to mean

two-corner chads. I don't think the U.S. Supreme Court would have overturned that.

POSNER: That's too academic an analysis. I don't think that it was a mistake for Gore to argue for extension of the protest period from November



14 to November 26. This was a situation in which legal tactics could not be divorced from political goals. If Gore had accepted the certification on November 18, that would have been his doom. There never would have been a contest, there never would have been anything. It's very much like the Clinton business. Clinton apparently believed that if he admitted the affair with Monica Lewinsky he'd just be forced out. And so Clinton stonewalled. And, of course, what happened was that gradually people became accustomed to this scandalous behavior. This was exactly the problem with Gore. Many people, myself included, were very upset on November 8 not to have the president picked. And I was someone who hadn't even voted, so I didn't care who the president was particularly.

KARLAN: You didn't vote?

POSNER: I was out of the country and I didn't bother to get an absentee ballot. I didn't have a strong feeling about the candidates. However, the notion that there would not be a president picked in the election, *that* I found troublesome. And the trouble got worse on November 21—the Florida Supreme Court's decision that day was weird. The court compounded it later. It had set a deadline of November 26 for the recounts. Palm Beach County didn't meet it. It was only a few hours late, but that was the deadline, a deadline is a deadline, it was the court's own deadline, and Palm Beach didn't meet it. But on December 8 the Florida Supreme Court gave Gore those 215 (or 176, a discrepancy never reconciled) votes that the Palm Beach recount had awarded him. The court let Gore pocket those votes. And, of course, it let him keep the Broward County votes, which had been recovered from spoiled ballots by the most subjective kind of dimple counting. And then the court ordered a statewide count of undervotes, ignoring the overvotes, very arbitrarily. It was just a botch. And, meanwhile, the court hadn't even bothered, on December 8, when it issued this new revision of the election code, to respond to the U.S. Supreme Court's December 4 request for clarification of its earlier opinion. The Florida Supreme Court knew, of course, exactly what kind of recount procedures to adopt in order to maximize the likelihood that Gore would overtake Bush's lead.

KARLAN: Absolutely, but that kind of selective judgment infects everybody. It also infects the U.S. Supreme Court. If you had complained a year ago to the Supreme Court that Florida was violating the equal-protection clause by using different voting machines, you wouldn't have won a single vote from nine justices. They wouldn't have taken the case for review.

V. HOW SHOULD THIS HAVE PLAYED OUT IN THE SUPREME COURT?

KARLAN: In the abstract, it's the wrong result. I tried to figure out which voters were injured, and actually went back and looked at all the complaints that were filed in the contest-phase lawsuit that became *Bush* v. *Gore*, trying to figure out who's the injured party here and what's the injury. As a citizen who casts a vote, I'm entitled to have my vote counted. I'm entitled to have the votes of people who share my views who also cast legal votes counted, and if their votes aren't counted I'm injured. But I am not injured by counting anybody's legal vote. So it's a question of how is a voter whose vote has been counted injured by the Florida Supreme Court's order to recount other people's votes? If all of the votes that they counted in the recount are validly counted, then the fact that some other votes never get counted doesn't actually injure me. That's why I say that the person who was injured—if anyone was—by what was going on in Florida really was George Bush, but his injury was not an equal-protection violation. It might have been an Article 2 violation; it might have been a due-process problem. But it wasn't an equal-protection matter. There is no voter who was rendered better off by what

IF YOU HAD COMPLAINED A YEAR AGO TO THE SUPREME COURT THAT FLORIDA WAS VIOLATING THE EQUAL-PROTECTION CLAUSE BY USING DIFFERENT VOTING MACHINES, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE WON THE VOTE OF A SINGLE JUSTICE

the Supreme Court did here, at least not in the sense of enjoying more equal protection.

POSNER: Yes, I agree. Which is why I think the Court should have decided the case on the basis of Article 2, which gives the state legislatures the power to determine how presidential electors are chosen. Basing the decision on Article 2 is simpler and more robust, because all it says to the Florida Supreme Court is: You have to follow the rules that the legislature set down. You can interpret the rules, but you can't just brush them aside. The other nice thing is that then you don't have the Supreme Court saying that *Bush v. Gore* is a ticket that's good for this day only; an Article 2 ruling would apply to all cases within its domain, that is, all cases involving disputes over presidential electors.

KARLAN: That *was* amazing. They wrote, "Our consideration is limited to the present circumstances, for the problem of equal protection in election processes generally presents many complexities." In other words: Don't try this at home, kids.

POSNER: Don't bother us again with this.

KARLAN: But people *are* trying it at home. Six voting cases have been filed since November 7, all based on the Supreme Court's equal-protection arguments. There's one in Georgia, three in Illinois, and two in Florida. I don't understand why the Court didn't just say, This election is a statistical tie. The tragedy is that the margin of error for these voting machines is broader than the margin of victory. That may just as well be true for the hand recounts, so after a recount we will have no more assurance that the right guy has won than before. That's the only justification I can think of for abandoning the recount.

POSNER: What I find most puzzling is the Souter-Breyer position. They agree that there's an equal-protection violation but they want the Florida Supreme Court to have a chance to order resumption of the recount under uniform standards. But given the time constraints, that would have been infeasible, as I said earlier. They may have foreseen that the Florida Supreme Court would give up. The court had dropped hints in several of its opinions that it might not make it by any of the conceivably applicable deadlines. And so the case might have gone back to the Florida Supreme Court, and the court would have said, Sorry, we've run out of time; we give up. And in that way, the Supreme Court justices would, I guess, have avoided the hit. They would have screwed around in some way by their interventions, but they wouldn't bear the ultimate responsibility for having resolved the dispute.

KARLAN: In the last minute they could have remanded the case back to the Supreme Court of Florida.

POSNER: It might have petered out—time might have run out. That would have been a happy solution as far as I'm concerned. And if I were certain that that would have been the sequel, then fine, but I'm not that confident that it would have been.

KARLAN: With the recount and a possible remand to the Florida Supreme Court, it was like deciding how to treat a dying patient: Do you issue a Do Not Resuscitate order? Or do you just throttle the guy? In *Bush v. Gore*, the Supreme Court chose to throttle him.

VI. HOW WILL WE REMEMBER *BUSH V. GORE*?

POSNER: It depends on the success of Bush's presidency. If he turns out to be a terrible flop, some of the ignominy will adhere to the Supreme Court. If he's a successful president, and if, as appears to be the case, people outside of academic circles have lost interest in the decision, then it won't be infamous other than in professional circles.

KARLAN: Well, it won't go into the canon of great law.

POSNER: No one will argue with that.

KARLAN: But I don't think it will go into the canon of disastrous law either. It's not *Korematsu*, the Japanese-American internment case, and it's definitely not *Dred Scott*, the 1857 decision in which the Supreme Court said black people have no rights. The case it reminds me of most, as a matter of legal craftsmanship, is 1973's *U.S. v. Kras*. That was a bankruptcy case where the Court held that if you didn't have enough money to pay the filing fee in bankruptcy court, you couldn't go bankrupt. Absurd, right? The end part of *Bush v. Gore* has the same feel. The Court says that because this recount violates the equal-protection rights of voters, we can't be sure that the right will be protected—sort of the "misery loves company" theory of equal protection. And this time around, the Court's decision affects the entire

ELECTION 2000 LEGAL DISPUTE TIMELINE

NOVEMBER

7 Voters go to the polls to elect their 43rd president. At 7:49 P.M., EST, NBC is the first television network to name Al Gore the winner of Florida. The three other networks soon follow suit. At 10 P.M., CBS is the first network to retract the call.

8 At 2:16 A.M., the Fox network's Decision Desk, managed by George W. Bush's first cousin John Ellis, calls the presidential race for Bush. At 4:05 A.M., the call is retracted. By late morning, Bush's lead out of nearly 6 million votes is 1,784 votes. Neither candidate concedes.

9 Gore asks for a hand count of presidential ballots in Volusia, Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties.

11 Bush sues in federal court to stop manual recounts in these counties.

13 Volusia County files suit in Leon County Circuit Court seeking to extend the Tuesday deadline for a final vote count.

Florida's secretary of state, Katherine Harris, says she will not extend the 5 P.M. November 14 deadline for certifying election results.

U.S. District Judge Donald M. Middlebrooks refuses to stop manual recounts in Florida.

Palm Beach County seeks advisory opinions from the Division of Elections, which is under the secretary of state, and from the Florida attorney general to determine if it should proceed with a hand count.

14 Bush appeals Judge Middlebrooks's ruling to the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta.

Secretary of State Harris sets a deadline for Seminole County and 5 P.M. for counties seeking a manual recount to submit a written justification.

Leon County Judge Terry Lewis denies the request for an injunction and upholds the Florida deadline to submit election results by 5 P.M., but rules that counties may notify the secretary of state that recounts are pending, and are allowed to continue recounting and to file updated or corrected returns.

After receiving conflicting advisory opinions, Palm Beach County asks the Florida Supreme Court if it should proceed with the hand count.

15 The Florida Supreme Court denies Secretary of State Harris's motion to halt manual counting of ballots. Harris says she will not accept results of any hand recounts when it is time to certify the Florida vote on November 18.

16 Gore files an emergency motion in state court to prevent Secretary of State Harris from certifying the results until the manual recounts have been completed.

The Florida Supreme Court issues an interim order that Palm Beach County can proceed with a manual recount of ballots.

17 The Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals denies Bush's request to stop manual recounts on constitutional grounds.

Leon County Judge Lewis rules that Secretary of State Harris's decision to exclude hand recounted votes was not an abuse of discretion and allows the decision to stand.

The Florida Supreme Court orders Harris not to certify the Florida vote until it can rule on whether hand recounts will be added to the final tally.

21 The Florida Supreme Court unanimously rules that state election officials must include the results of manual recounts in Florida's final presidential tally.

22 Palm Beach County Judge Jorge Labarga rules that election officials must consider dimpled chad ballots.

Miami-Dade County Canvassing Board stops the recount of ballots.

Bush files a certiorari petition with the U.S. Supreme Court, asking the Court to block the Florida Supreme Court decision allowing hand counts.

23 Florida Supreme Court declines to order Miami-Dade County to resume recounting ballots.

24 The U.S. Supreme Court agrees to hear Bush's appeal of the November 21 decision of the Florida Supreme Court.

26 Secretary of State Harris announces the certified vote totals with a 537 vote lead for Bush, thereby ending the protest phase and beginning Florida's contest phase.

27 Gore files a complaint in Leon County Court to contest the election.

29 Leon County Judge N. Sanders Sauls orders the 14,000 ballots contested by Gore to be brought to his courtroom along with the voting booths and tabulation machines.

30 A committee of the Florida legislature votes to recommend a special session with the intent of selecting its own slate of presidential electors.

Gore asks the Florida Supreme Court to order an immediate hand recount of the disputed ballots.

In the U.S. Supreme Court, Democrats challenge the right of Florida's legislature to select their own presidential electors.

DECEMBER

1 Oral argument in the case of *Bush v. Palm Beach County Canvassing Board* is presented in the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Florida Supreme Court affirms the decision of the Palm Beach Circuit Court that the butterfly-ballot design did not disenfranchise voters.

4 The U.S. Supreme Court vacates the decision of the Florida Supreme Court, ordering it to clarify its definition of a legal standard for recounts.

Leon County Judge Sauls rules that the vote tally for Nassau County should remain unchanged and that hand recounts of disputed ballots are not needed in Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties.

6 The Eleventh Circuit Court denies Bush's request for an injunction to stop manual recounts in four Florida counties.

8 The Florida Supreme Court overturns Leon County Judge Sauls's decision to reject Gore's request for a recount of the undervote in a few Florida counties and orders the recount to begin immediately.

9 The U.S. Supreme Court stays the Florida recount. Justice Scalia, in a concurring opinion, writes that "[t]he counting of votes that are of questionable legality does in my view threaten irreparable harm to [George Bush], and to the country, by casting a cloud upon what he claims to be the legitimacy of his election. Count first, and rule upon legality afterwards, is not a recipe for producing election results that have the public acceptance democratic stability requires."

12 The U.S. Supreme Court reverses the ruling of the Florida Supreme Court in *Gore v. Harris*. The recounts are halted. Justice Stevens in his dissent writes: "Although we may never know with complete certainty the identity of the winner of this year's Presidential election, the identity of the loser is perfectly clear. It is the Nation's confidence in the judges as an impartial guardian of the rule of law."

22 The Florida Supreme Court issues an opinion on remand from the U.S. Supreme Court, writing: "Accordingly, pursuant to the direction of the United States Supreme Court, we hold appellants can be afforded no relief."

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country and thousands of voters, not just a few toll-takers who want to declare bankruptcy.

POSNER: Actually, I think that's like *Korematsu*. But then I actually think *Korematsu* was correctly decided. In 1942, there was a real threat of a possible Japanese invasion of the West Coast. I believe there had actually been some minor shelling of the Oregon coast by a Japanese submarine. Unquestionably, the order excluding people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast was tainted by racial prejudice. On the other hand, many Japanese Americans had refused to swear unqualified allegiance to the United States. Good or bad, it was a military order in a frightening war. Although the majority opinion, written by Justice Hugo Black, is very poor, the decision itself is defensible. The Court could have said: We interpret the Constitution to allow racial discrimination by government when there are urgent reasons for it, and if the military in the middle of a world war says we have to do that, then we're going to defer, because the Constitution is not a suicide pact. What this has in common with *Bush v. Gore* is that the Supreme Court could have said: We're going to adopt a bold interpretation of Article 2 in order to avert the possibility of political and constitutional chaos.

Another complaint made about the case that I think is trivial is the conflict of interest charge stemming from Scalia's son working for the law firm that employs Bush's counsel.

KARLAN: Yeah, that's ridiculous. Scalia would have ruled the same way even if his son had been working for Gore's lawyer's firm.

POSNER: The real conflict of interest is that justices are not indifferent to their colleagues and successors, and the president appoints them. That's an inherent serious conflict, because even if the justices play it straight and each says to himself or herself, I'm not going to think about the effect of this decision on my legacy as a Supreme Court justice, you can't exclude the possibility of an unconscious influence. If these justices had not been so interested in this case for them personally, they might not have picked up on some of the mistakes by the Florida Supreme Court. What a judge notices as "something bad enough to require action" is likely to be influenced by unconscious factors. You are just alert to things the way a drug-sniffing police dog is alert to cocaine.

KARLAN: But judges have to be really alert these days. It's sort of James Bradley Thayer's theory, ratcheted up. Thayer was a Harvard constitutional-law scholar at the turn of the last century who said that we want judicial review of legislative and political decisions, but we want it to be very sparing, because otherwise we make the political branches rather flabby, and they'll say, Let the courts sweat all [illegible]

[illegible] strike it down. I was on a talk show with Charles [illegible] did about this. He said the Supreme Court should [illegible] Congress didn't want to take the political heat for [illegible] to come to [illegible]

POSNER: But I don't buy Thayer's theory. He thought that [illegible] passive we'd have a more vital politics. Nothing [illegible] have any objection to striking down obviously unconstitutional statutes that a state legislature [illegible] der to pacify some angry group that has an influence [illegible] down.

POSNER: Right. Exactly. Why isn't that an appropriate [illegible] throw a bone to their angry constituents, but it does no harm because the courts throw the bone out. So responsibility is diffused. A lot of [illegible] back at the debates surrounding the Electoral [illegible] would be a very grave fault indeed and a very serious objection to refer a political question [illegible] public odium of one or the other of the two great [illegible] to fundamentals, depends critically on what you [illegible] President Summers, and then a terribly damaged [illegible] ment. He'd start off his presidency with no administration [illegible] holdovers, and probably fall flat on his face. So I

WE CAN TALK ABOUT ATTAINING TRUTHS IN MATTERS OF FACT, BUT THE "WINNER" OF AN ELECTION IS A LEGAL DESIGNATION RATHER THAN A FACTUAL STATUS, MEANING SOMEONE WHO HAS PREVAILED IN AN ARTIFICIAL CONTEST

[illegible] *Bush v. Gore* was a pragmatic decision. It was not a decision based on legal technicalities. As legal conservatives [illegible]

[illegible]

POSNER: I think something should be done about the Electoral College. Not get rid of it but adjust it. First, there's a potential problem that could really cause electors to [illegible] runaway electors. If you have a close election, a couple of defections could swing the election to the other side, and that could also produce a terrible fight in Congress with no guidance from the Constitution about how to resolve it.

KARLAN: Today, it's absolutely clear that the electors are not expected to deliberate, as they were originally intended to do. They are no longer, as they might have been at the framing, the "great men" of the particular states.

POSNER: They're picked to be loyalists.

KARLAN: To follow the party line. They're not going to deliberate. Why have them there? If this were a railroad, you'd say they're featherbedding here, because you don't need the coal shoveler. This is an electric train.

POSNER: I think we need a constitutional amendment to bind their votes to the candidates on whose slates they were elected, so that there [illegible]

KARLAN: The other thing that would really help is to train poll workers so that they understand what the law is. A lot of them don't understand the law on assisting voters, or they don't understand that the law dictates that when a voter spoils his ballot you have to give him another one. There are lots of problems all over the country with poll workers who don't understand. What happens if someone shows up and says, I'm registered to vote here, and you can't find [illegible] you're supposed to allow that person to vote—it's called an affidavit ballot.

POSNER: There's also the problem that in the event of competing slates coming to Congress [illegible]

KARLAN: It is terrifying. There are no rules.

POSNER: No procedures, no deadlines, nothing. [illegible] the Constitution, even [illegible] the electoral votes will be counted in the presence of the two houses of Congress. It doesn't even say who counts—presumably it's the vice president, but it's unclear.

KARLAN: The Constitution doesn't seem to give a role to Congress in Article 2 except as an audience. So Al Gore could have just opened the votes and said, "I won!" It's one of those constitutional oddities. For example, the Constitution provides that the vice president preside over everything except the impeachment of the president, but it doesn't explain who presides over the impeachment of the vice president, so, technically, that person would be the vice president himself.

POSNER: And things like this become important because, with the growing professionalization of political campaigning, close elections may well be more frequent in the future. The better both parties are at gauging voter sentiment and assembling winning coalitions, the likelier they are to fight to a near tie.

KARLAN: As the parties come closer together in their centrist politics, they also get much better at figuring out where the marginal voters are and how to surgically appeal to them.

POSNER: But I can't agree that the solution is to have the president elected by a pure nationwide popular vote.

KARLAN: You're right. If the nationwide popular vote had been relevant in this case, imagine the recount scenario. George W. Bush would have had to pick up three or four votes in each of the country's 180,000 precincts to shift Gore's 500,000-vote margin away from him. Nightmare. Recounts everywhere.

POSNER: And if you can look anywhere in the country for mistakes, fraud, scandals, you're going to find plenty, because a presidential election is a very imperfect process.

KARLAN: That's why it's important to amend the rules now. The problem with all elections is that once the election is over, a lot of the worst things that can be done to a voter can't be fixed. The voter who goes to the polls and says, "Here's my voter registration card, I want to vote," and the sheriff says, "Tough, you ain't voting here today"—there's nothing that can be done for that voter. He can sue for damages, but there's nothing that can be done to count that vote afterward. The voter who gets to the polling place and the polling has been moved and they didn't post the notification, there's nothing that can be done. The voter who applies for an absentee ballot and it's not sent to him, if he doesn't go in and vote in person, it's too bad again. All of which is why you want the

laws to work fairly all up front, because after the fact it's usually impossible to fix mistakes.

I think that one of the things contributing to the bitterness is the fact that it is so easy to imagine states of the world in which Gore wins, and it seems like a cascade of unfortunate errors that allowed Bush to squeak through. But the long time that it took to resolve the deadlock is why Bush is likely to have won in the end, because most people felt the election is decided for good or ill on November 7, and that any post-election search for the "real winner" is more trouble than it's worth. Worse, it's a snipe hunt. We perhaps can talk about attaining truths in matters of fact, but the "winner" of an election is a legal designation rather than a factual status. The winner is someone who has prevailed in an artificial contest. Suppose you and I play a tennis match and I win 6–0, 6–4, 6–4. So you've won fourteen games, and I've won only twelve. But there's no objective truth to which you can appeal and say, "I won more games, so I'm the real winner." Well, elections are very artificial contests, too. They don't measure the popular will—children can't vote, and the elderly vote in disproportionate numbers, and half the eligible voters don't vote even in a presidential election, and many voters are uninformed, and so on and so forth. It's just a very artificial business. Part of the artifice here is the butterfly ballot, which is a perfectly lawful ballot, a punch-card technology that is entirely lawful, and a complicated juridical system that gives the secretary of state discretion to shut off recounts. And in that very artificial system, I think Bush really was the winner. You can posit any kind of hypothetical election rules you want and then Gore becomes the winner, but those weren't the rules on Election Day.

KARLAN: Which is why the media called Florida for Gore. Because they relied on exit polls, which measured voters' real intentions. All those extra votes for Pat Buchanan would have given Gore the election easily. But the machinery registered those votes as not for Gore, though the exit polls gave those votes to Gore. That's the irony of the media torturing itself for calling Florida "wrong."

POSNER: Are you saying

KARLAN: The media called it exactly right that night, if you're referring to what voters thought they did.

POSNER: That gets right to my point. For example, if Florida had announced earlier in the year that they were remedying the problem of overvotes and undervotes in punch-card counties by replacing all the punch-card systems, then Bush might have realized that there was going to be a larger Black

are shaped by whatever rules are in force, and that's another reason why it's so difficult to talk about the ultimate truth of who won, because who won depended on how the contestants a

the

KARLAN: Yes, the election is a formal process—it doesn't allow somebody to say, Well, you know, on the Florida Supreme Court five of the seven justices thought the recount should go forward and so did four justices on the U.S. Supreme Court. That's nine in favor and only seven



against, so it's terribly unfair. No, the answer is that one of those courts is more final than the other. There's also some slippage and leakage in the vote: Did a plurality of the people who went to the polls in Florida on Election Day think

voting booth? Yes, absolutely. But did Al Gore win the election? That's a totally different question, which is dependent on all kinds of things, like the 2,000 people who voted for him but punched the card for Pat Buchanan instead. Or

wrote in Gore's name as well as blackening in the circle, so their votes didn't count. Then there are the

puncture their chads. There are many contingencies in the factual debate. But then there's

its answer, which in our system is final whether it's factually right or not. And the answer to the legal question is that George Bush won the election in Florida. ■

DAY OF THE LOCUST

A new pest threatens to wipe out the California wine industry

By William Hamilton

With its eponymous wings folded under its carapace, the glassy-winged sharpshooter looks like a muddy SUV. Its ancient insect engineering and big, flat-head power, however, suggest the mistrusted Harleys of the very baddest chapters of the old Hells Angels motorcycle club. Hitchhiking under from the American Southeast turns out to be the reason you have never tasted [illegible] wine.

When southern California's booming housing development needed more landscaping material than the state was producing, ornamental trees and shrubs were trucked in that direction by the big southern Cali[illegible]. Straddling Hula[illegible] the [illegible] north-south transport in this long state—right through the huge main[illegible] in the Central Valley—rolled trucks full of trees and turf and plants headed for the proliferating tracts of commuter [illegible] brought on in places like the Silicon Valley. Hitching a ride on this to[illegible]

[illegible]

liage came the glassy-winged sharpshooter. Unfortunately, down in southern California's Riverside County, it had already developed a taste for grapevines.

The Napa Valley grew as many walnuts, prunes, and cattle as grapes when I was a boy there. It's all grapes now, only they're not often called that anymore, "grape" seeming too blue-collar a term for such a luxurious crop. Even the grape growers are now called just "growers," without the "grape." They call the little round balls they are growing "fruit."

Step onto an oak-bowered lawn outside St. Helena (my hometown) in the middle of the Napa Valley. Take a glass of wine, which is from those vineyards right out there. Hold the glass by the foot (the disc on the bottom of the stem that makes it possible to drink without a cupbearer) and swirl the wine around so you can watch it slide down the walls of the glass. Take a sniff. Have a sip. Walk over to your host, compliment the wine, and look out at his vineyards. Say, "How's your fruit?" This insider word usage will get you a different answer from, "How are your grapes?" You'll hear about Brix and sugar and microclimates and noble rot—and perhaps about an obscure, ancient varietal from a Mediterranean region the grower is trying out over there in the foothill vineyard for his "meritage" blend.

Of course not everyone in the wine industry has it all quite so attractively together as your host on this lovely lawn today. And since he was an investment banker before he bought the place and put in the winery, he had a few lessons to learn himself. Like the time he asked a big Central Valley grower how many tons an acre of cabernet he was getting. The vineyard veteran looked at the sophisticated newcomer a moment, taking in the Austrian corduroys, the Ivy League accent, and the little silver wire-framed eyeglasses, and answered the question with one of his own: "How many times a week do you fuck your wife?"

The Napa Valley won most of its fine wine reputation one afternoon in 1976 at what *Time* magazine called the "Judgment of Paris." This expert blind tasting of France's greatest wines alongside some Napa Valley stuff arranged by the English wine merchant Stephen Spurrier had to be, at least in terms of marketing, one of France's lowest twentieth-

entury moments. Not even Spurrier had any idea of the global publicity-relations effect of French experts unwittingly choosing Napa's Stag's Leap Cabernet for first place over two premier cru classé grands crus Châteaux Haut-Brion and Mouton Rothschild—and then picking another Napa Valley product, Chateau Montelena Chardonnay, for World's Greatest White wine honors, over Meursault-Charmes and Bâtard-Montrachet. Among the most flabbergasted were the Napa Valley proprietors of these suddenly greatest wineries in the world.

By assigning a Royal Commission in 1855 to classify the wines of Bordeaux according to quality, France invented the sales device (never more profitable than now) of a ranked list. Who is a dentist in Adelaide, Australia, or a Chicago professor or even a Napa Valley vintner to argue with a title like "Le Grand Vin de la Chateau Latour, Premier Grand Cru Classé" issued nearly two hundred years ago by a royal committee in a country that had been in the wine business for more than two thousand years? A country credited with inventing kissing with the tongue? Spurrier had ingeniously appointed another committee of just such superior, native French experts as the 1855 one—a cordon-bleu panel who would probably spend a great deal of the rest of their lives in grim retrospect, not to mention beards, sunglasses, and new names. *Quel tarte pas.* With the clunk of a head dropping into a guillotine basket, an old order fell.

The Napa Valley won its unexpected world title just as a marketplace for wine was opening in America with New World enormity. The United States Brewers Foundation's proud motto, "Beer Belongs . . . Enjoy It," run under happy pictures of family picnics washed down by brown bottles of brew painted by



Napa Valley Vineyard Map, 1876, lithograph

the way of Sonoma County's once flourishing breweries—under, and under new vineyards and wineries and country homes. Planting some grapes and starting a winery became the second career of oenophiles retiring from advertising and industry and finance and law. Architects and even landscape architects began to find work building photogenic homes and wineries in the beautiful Napa Valley, just over an hour from San Francisco.

Making wine turned out to be more work than most expected, but for some it worked out so spectacularly well that not even they remember much about their first careers. Wine was becoming a stylish success story. And then the boom began. The Silicon Valley banked in San Francisco.

At the Napa Valley Wine Auction last summer, a retired [illegible] Systems executive paid $500,000 for a six-liter bottle of Screaming Eagle Cabernet. Screaming Eagle is only one of a number of Napa Valley wines so rare and prized that they sell completely out for vast sums before ever coming to a public market. Lucky subscribers to such limited productions often flip their purchases in the auction for three or four times their purchase price.

In the comparatively less-than-dime-sprinkled venue of a daily real estate market, potential vineyard land in this region is selling for $100,000 an acre and more. A five-acre piece in St. Helena with an unremarkable house, some landscaping, and a pool just went for $4.1 million—resold Beverly Hills figure. It cost around $50,000 to plant an acre, and vines don't produce fruit until they are between three and five years old. Under current regulations, the minimum size for a new buildable parcel in the Napa County agricultural watershed is 160 acres. Yet even with these financial and regulatory handicaps, such opportunities are hard to find. Sales are brisk and competitive. At what bars remain in the haute-culinary Napa Valley, real-estate stories have replaced the traditional fishing yarn. Everyone shakes his head over the last price paid, and anyone who hung on to a piece of property feels damn lucky. Like Andrea Palladio in the Roman boom times, and Richard Morris Hunt in nineteenth-century Newport, favored architects are building villas in the wine country by the tens of thousands of square feet. Because of the vast county parcel requirements, these palaces do not sit cheek-by-jowl the way they do in Newport's comical ghetto of châteaus. But they do seem to command every knoll, like a proliferating pack of steroidally enhanced architectural prairie dogs.

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HARPER'S

"He wants the wine cellar to have a glass wall looking through the waterfall at his valley view," architect Sandy Walker explained to me of a cathedral-sized floor plan on his drafting table. "And he shall have it."

Without this mad wine country lifestyle boom, this beautiful landscape (vineyards and wineries and mansions aren't the worst available eyesores) would probably have become another Bay Area suburb. The old crops of prunes and walnuts, the little cattle operations, the tacky old tourist attractions of hot springs, and even the one famous whorehouse that I remember from my boyhood would never have made the kind of money that holds off real estate development. Without the kind of luck that got great Napa rather than great Sonoma or Australian or South American wine to Paris at the right time, what is now, like Disneyland, a huge tourist attraction in California (and home to Walt Disney's widow before she died) would have nothing to attract tourists. It would be pens of subdivisions with wooden chimneys and an occasional old, homeless-looking oak tree. But the wine boom saved it. Both as a luxurious country retreat and as a real business, the wine country prospers. Bottom lines here are real and huge and growing. The Bank of America as well as Silicon Valley banks have loaned eagerly to what has been a phenomenal success story. What could possibly go wrong?

Down in southern California the orange groves pulled to build Disneyland in Anaheim themselves replaced a pioneer effort at California winemaking. Started, like so many New World vineyards (including the first ones in Brazil, Australia, and the Napa Valley), by German immigrants, in 1859 the southern California wine industry was an immediate success. Grapes grew well, and wine and money from it were made in Anaheim until the 1880s, when the vines suddenly and mysteriously started drying up. The ripening fruit turned to raisins. Instead of flaming red and gold, one grim autumn the grape leaves crumpled up brown. By 1895, 35,000 acres of southern California vineyard were dead.

The blight was not phylloxera, the notorious root louse that wiped out first the vineyards of France and then those of California—a plague ultimately remedied by planting vineyards with a phylloxera-resistant native American rootstock onto which the noble varieties of wine grapes could be grafted (making, California vintners are proud to point out, all contemporary French wine American wine at root). The roots of the vines drying up in Anaheim were healthy. This was a different scourge. Thankfully, whatever was killing off Anaheim's vineyards wasn't spreading. After wiping out every grapevine there, phylloxera's mysterious little sister pestilence seemed through. It became a wine-history footnote first known as Anaheim disease.

Since "Anaheim, Home of Anaheim Disease" was no town motto for a young and hopeful agricultural community, nominal honors for the disaster were eagerly passed on to a U.S. Department of Agriculture plant pathologist doing autopsies on the corpses of *Vitis vinifera*, the wine-producing grapevine. Newton B. Pierce proved that what would come to be called Pierce's disease was caused by a living organism that had invaded the vine's upper reaches, its trunk and branches. Correct as he was about this, Pierce couldn't figure out if the pathogen was a virus or a bacterium, or what was shooting it into the wood. It wasn't until nearly a hundred years later that the killer was identified as a bacterium, *Xylella fastidiosa*, and its carrier as one of three native varieties of leaf-hopping insects popularly called "sharpshooters." The *Xylella fastidiosa* (a name that in happier circumstances might have been applied to the wine critic) is considered *fastidiosa* because it settles exclusively in the xylem, the water-bearing tissues plumbing a plant. In a *Vitis vinifera* xylem, it not only multiplies exponentially but litters, plugging up the entire circulatory system conduit by conduit, until the vine has strangled to death.

After Anaheim disease became

Pierce's disease, and orange groves replaced the vineyards of Anaheim, the southern California vineyard disaster faded into obscure anecdote. There was no major recurrence elsewhere in the state. Except for a 1940s outbreak in the San Joaquin Valley, and a persistent but contained presence throughout the state—including the premier *terroirs* of the Napa and Sonoma valleys, where the native blue-green sharpshooters' comparatively harmless picnics in the vineyards kept the incidence low—Pierce's disease became unobtrusive enough to be written off as just another of Mother Nature's annoying but bearable extractions of agricultural tribute. Through 1992 only the most technical histories of the California wine industry carry even index entries for Pierce's disease.

"Down on the valley floor they get frost, and up here in the hills we get these damn 'shooters; in agriculture there's always something out there about to make you miserable," was about how growers complained about the tiny insects they called sharpshooters all the way into the 1990s—not with a shudder but with a shrug.

Spectacularly and horribly, this situation has changed. Pierce's disease now has a comparatively humongous new agent, the Florida-born glassy-winged sharpshooter. Twice the size of the old locals with five times the range, and crazy about grapevines, the intruder has made Pierce's disease into a threat to California agriculture on the order of the San Andreas Fault.

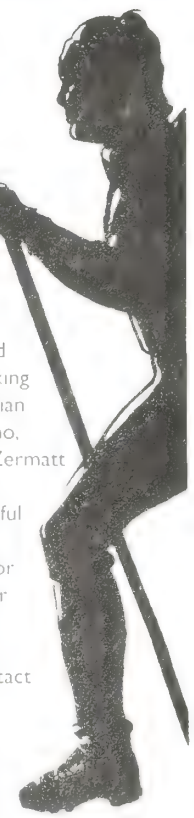
In 1997, growers in the Riverside County city of Temecula noted the first cases of PD ever in their vineyards (Pierce's disease, PD, and its new vehicle, the glassy-winged sharpshooter, GWSS, are notorious enough to have become, like AIDS and NASDAQ, acronyms). Because the incidence was small, the few infected vines were replanted and attentions turned to other worries. The next year's growing season, however, revealed a marked increase. Scientists called in from the University of California at Riverside to test for Pierce's disease discovered a startling 27–97 percent infection in Temecula's vineyards. By 1999 hundreds of acres of vines were dead. Agricultural epidemiologists quickly determined that the *Xylella fastidiosa* bacterium was coming into the vineyards from adjacent citrus groves, and that the bugs delivering it were not from the three old, known California sharpshooter families.

Because, like a serial killer who behaves perfectly to his landlady, *Xylella* occupies other plants with less or no fatality, it can lay low. The Pierce's disease bacterium had long enjoyed an oblivious hospitality throughout the state. With nothing to carry it into vineyards, or almond groves or oleanders, where it kills its host, it isn't even apparent. The formerly domestic blackberry now spread especially along streamsides throughout the state thrives with *Xylella fastidiosa* aboard. But grapevines have no defense.

Inquiries to the office of one of the foremost Pierce's disease experts, Dr. Alexander Purcell, of the University of California at Berkeley, have reached such a volume that he has set up a long and increasingly tentacled website to deal with PD research and news. "*Xylella* does seem to stay in the cell it enters in some plants, spreading no further and after a couple of seasons completely dying out, but we don't know why," says Purcell. "All we know for sure right now is that the grapevine isn't one of them. Chronic Pierce's disease is 100 percent fatal to *Vitis vinifera*. There is no known cure."

Whereas the comparatively tiny native California sharpshooters can fly only a fifth as far as the glassy-winged sharpshooters and because they can get their PD-infected stylets into a grapevine only when it is relatively soft, as it is during the growing season—enabling growers to prune out most of the infected branches when dormant vines are cut back in the winter—the invader is a much more apocalyptic threat to vineyards. It can sink its stylet through a vine's permanent wood, releasing *Xylella* into xylems at any time of the growth cycle. Whereas aphids and leafhoppers and most stylet-sucking insects bypass the nutritionally thin sort of

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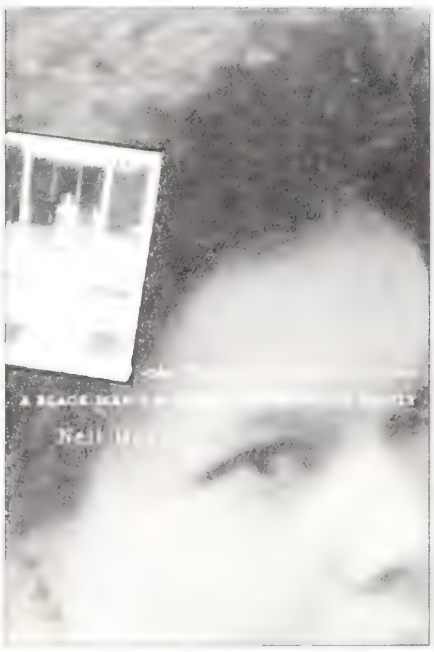
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Chaucer *The Canterbury Tales*	Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics*	Dante *Purgatorio*
Darwin *The Voyage of the Beagle*	Dante *Purgatorio*	Goethe: *Theory of Colors*
Milton *Paradise Lost*	Dostoevsky *Demons*	The Plays of Kalidasa
Scott *The Big Quartet*	Plato's Critique of Rhetoric *Ion* *Gorgias*	The Poetry of Wallace Stevens
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brew irrigating *Vitis vinifera*, this bug seems perversely engineered to feed specifically on it—specifically, and, to the wine industry, diabolically, evolved to destroy grapevines.

"I just don't want to even think about it. But I do, especially at around three in the morning, when I wake up filled with so much dread I can't get back to sleep," says Jay Heminway, the founder, proprietor, grower, and winemaker of Green & Red Vineyard, a producer of succulent zinfandel.

"We'll get rid of it," predicts Michael Mondavi, president and CEO of the great and global Robert Mondavi Corporation. "Unlike phylloxera, the glassy-winged sharpshooter operates above ground, and it's almost as big as a fly. We'll get rid of it. We just have to keep it away from here until we figure out how. And it's not just the wine industry, you know, that's threatened by this. It's almonds and alfalfa, and, from what's happening in Brazil, we know citrus could be next. Just about all of California agriculture has a future riding on getting rid of this one. We did away with phylloxera—twice. We'll do away with PD and the glassy-winged sharpshooter the same way."

As I stood with the rangily attractive Cathy Roybal, deputy agricultural commissioner for Contra Costa County, in front of a model home at the brand-new Garin Ranch housing development in Brentwood, Contra Costa County—the first Bay Area county proximate to Napa Valley to have reported a glassy-winged sharpshooter infestation—the movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* came to mind. Cathy and her office had just completed a grueling, three-week "GWSS delimitation" here. After detailing how the Discovery, Outreach, and Delimitation guidelines of the state's Glassy-Winged Sharpshooter Task Force work out here in reality—with an understaffed team, unfamiliar officials, and environmental protesters (who, she believes, were attracted by TV-news lights) trying to keep residents of the area from cooperating—Cathy agreed that the situation resembled that of the old movie. "And it was probably

ecause it started in these model omes that nobody noticed. Nobody ves in a model home." Then she ot serious: "You know, this isn't the rst time we've had Pierce's disease p here. This used to be great al-ond country. That's why we've got reets like Almond Way in Brent-wood. But something brought PD nto the almond groves. Killed off he whole industry. All the trees just suddenly dried up. They called it 'Goldendeath.'"

California resembles a leg, slightly bent at the knee. South of Los Angeles, down near what increasingly resembles its Achilles' heel, lies Temecula, where the poison arrow irst struck. Calls to the vineyardist at Callaway vineyards, a winery with 740 acres of vines in Temecula, were eventually returned instead by a corporate spokesman hundreds of miles away (Callaway is owned by the British global conglomerate Allied Domecq), who told me that Callaway was "tired of being the poster boy for Pierce's disease." He said Callaway had plenty of other sources for grapes elsewhere from which to make wine until "this Pierce's thing is over." Apparently, the publicity Callaway got from its initial, cooperative attitude toward the press had turned on them: "poster boy" calls to mind a picture of a cripple, a useful image for charitable fund-raising but not for commercial sales.

Temecula lies halfway between Los Angeles and San Diego, at the juncture of two big highways. The first impression it gives is of new housing, housing starts, and land being bulldozed for housing. There are so many developments that a new sort of street sign hangs there, listing vertically the names of adjacent subdivisions: Chardonnay Hills, The Vineyard, Temeka Hills, Redhawk Vista, Vintage Reserve, and so on. "Wine Country" signs direct visitors through one development after another to a comparatively minute reach of vineyards and orange groves running toward the eastern hills. At Callaway Vineyards the fragrance of the crush was in the air. The vineyards looked patchy, but they had produced a record crop. "It hops around, you know?" a worker told me about the disease. "Some looks all right and then, right next to it, everything dead." For most of these vines, though, this abundant crop of 2000 would be their last.

Temecula provides an ominous model for the Napa Valley. An agricultural region is discovered to be hospitable to wine grapes. The charm of such a pretty place with such interesting agriculture and its proximity to jobs attracts real-estate development. Landscaping for the new subdivisions carries in the glassy-winged sharpshooters. The bugs poke stylets infected with Pierce's disease into the vines. Because there is no cure for PD—and because even if one were to be found in the next couple of years, the years more you would have to add on for a crop to grow and begin to pay interest on your outstanding loans would inexorably bankrupt these vineyards—Callaway is not replanting here. They have even changed the name of their otherwhere-sourced product to Callaway "Coastal" wines. As it was in Anaheim, so it is in Temecula. The place moves on to other uses. Temecula's final fate is already ravenously apparent: subdivisions. Like the Temecula Indians, who have been moved off their old territory, the very fine wine industry once growing on this ground that inspired such monikers as Chardonnay Hills and Vintage Reserve Estates may soon survive only as names on local road signs.

In the Napa Valley this fall day, ladled by rain-gorged blue-green hills under cobalt-blue skies, the yellow-leated vineyards run like molten gold. The air is deliciously fragrant with the crush of grapes from a spectacular harvest. Not just prosperity is abounding but more real wealth than even financiers ever imagined. But driving up here from nearby San Francisco, after marveling at the views and maybe even lowering a tinted window to take in a breath of the delicious, grape-smoked air, people with land up this way are looking anxiously at their road maps. The spraying Cathy Roybal commanded was right next door in Contra Costa County. They say a glassy-

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winged sharpshooter was actually found in Sonoma. The map shows how inexorably the thing is moving up from way down there at the bottom of California, clear down the state at Temecula.

The state capitol building in Sacramento has in its park one of the greatest stands of mature trees I've seen anywhere in the world. English elms there have achieved redwood specifications. There's a magnolia the size of a 200-year-old oak. The wonderful plantation set down in the 1880s gleams with health and majesty. It reminds you how California can apparently grow anything, with stupendous success. Across the street on October 26, in a state office building theater, the California Department of Food and Agriculture convened an open hearing to discuss the terrible danger to such fecundity from a new pest, the glassy-winged sharpshooter. The Title 3 Emergency Regulations pertaining to the Pierce's Disease Control Program (the action enabling the spraying of the infected subdivision in Contra Costa County) were to be discussed in an open forum. The format was five-minute speeches from interested parties. The venue brought together the preponderantly male representatives of the grape and nursery industries and a preponderantly female opposition to the "delimitation." The women spoke first.

Their props and catchphrases (one set up a tripod to videotape herself at the podium, another held with a practiced grip a poster of a child with what looked to me like a case of impetigo captioned "Is Your Wine Worth This?" and another surrounded herself with SCENT FREE ZONE signs) announced that they represented groups with names like Central Coast Canaries, the Ad Hoc Committee for Clean Water, and Mothers Against Toxics. They seemed, at worst, to be veteran protesters on a well-worn environmental circuit. At best they had a point. The financial might of huge investment inevitably muscles out planning, zoning, and permit perspectives. Any monoculture like the wine industry distorts the environment its way.

"How do we know this isn't just another scam being run by the big chemical and genetic-engineering industries, to get even more of our taxpayer dollars laundered through their buddies at the big universities, to cook up more toxic chemicals to poison us so they can get bigger, more synthetic yields and make more money?" they asked. "Why must taxpayers pay for corporate welfare?"

They have a point. To me, the problem seemed not so much their message as their image. At its most ludicrous, protest has become a kind of wolf-crying vaudeville circuit. Magick ("that's with a *k*," she advised the recording secretary) said she spoke for the bacterium, which we had no right to call a pest. She allowed as how she had channeled the voices of the grapes down at Temecula. They had explained to her that they were shriveling up in an act of civil disobedience to protest the war declared against glassy-winged sharpshooters. Magick was well enough turned out to suggest that she was either a handsomely rewarded *agent provocateuse* fielded to make protest look silly or an authentic member of another powerful, unspoken element of the protest sector, Environmentalists with Trust Funds. Although Magick looked like she was ready to channel other voices in other rooms where demonstration news might be being made, the ominous questions of aftereffects from our synthetic alterations of agriculture are at issue here.

"Everybody blames us! Back when this started, the growers shook hands and said they'd help us with this problem. But they just got $40 million to help with their emergency and we are hurting and they aren't showing us a penny," complained Jim Poorbaugh, who was representing the huge Monrovia Nurseries. After describing the impossible tasks landed on nurseries by emergency alerted politicians who had no idea what it was like to run a business, he finished on a hopeful note: "Long term, crises never turn out as bad as they seem."

"If we can land a man on the moon, we can beat this pest," Phil Larocca, a grower who oversees 5,000 organic acres of wine grapes, said just as hopefully. One such hope is a Mexican wasp successfully released in five counties, where it seemed to enjoy sharpshooter eggs in its *desayuno de huevos rancheros*. The problem is time. Sharpshooter *huevos* appear on the entomological menu only twice a year. Not that many wasps exist yet. Can anything be found before the glassy-winged sharpshooter gets to Napa, where there is plenty of long-resident PD waiting to be spread around those world-class vineyards?

While the nurserymen are facing the problem of their deliveries being throttled by emergency regulations, the growers are facing extinction. In Sacramento the growers brought no props and weren't angry. They were deeply, sleeplessly, white-knuckle worried. Most of them only wanted everything anyone could think of to be done as quickly and massively as humanly possible to keep the glassy-winged sharpshooter at bay. As it had once upon a time with phylloxera, time might bring a solution, a cure, a resistant vine, a sharpshooter predator—the kind of miracle science has pulled off so often, at least in the movies. Otherwise, inevitably, the glassy-winged sharpshooter will spread Pierce's disease in Napa and Sonoma the way it has in Temecula. America's world-class wine will go down like cotton to the boll weevil. The Napa and Sonoma valleys will become just more bedroom hives for Bay Area employment opportunity.

County Commissioners and other agricultural officials spoke of their efforts to halt the spread of the GWSS infestations. One of the more ironic problems they encountered was the result of prosperity: the effect of high employment on the availability of temporary staff. Initially, there simply weren't enough clerks available to process the paperwork necessary to orchestrate the $40 million of declared emergency funds.

As Peter Newton, of the Napa Valley's highly sophisticated Newton Vineyards, pointed out to me, not only are the growers and vintners of Napa rich; they mainly got that way as savvy and determined business veterans who have won a

obal reputation. Of course they are ready to defend their deep and famous interests here, by whatever means they must.

The spraying chemicals carbaryl and chlorpyrifos are both on the Pesticide Action Network's list of "California Bad Actor Pesticides." The rest of the agents that might be used to gas the alien insects from the American Southeast are almost equally notorious. If it comes to spraying, a confrontation between corporate strategists and furious domestic protesters will ignite TV screens across the country.

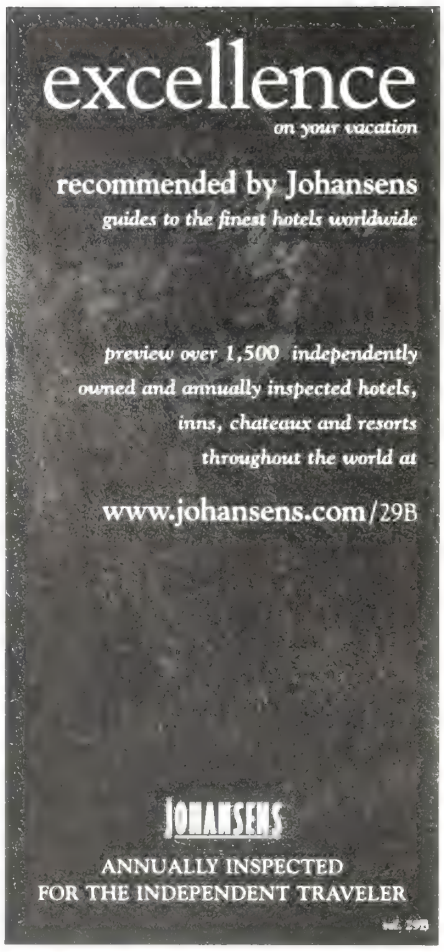
What the vintners fear almost as much as GWSS is not protesters but lawyers questioning the Title 3 Emergency Regulations adopted for the Pierce's Disease Control Program. Growers dread the possibility that, if legal hearings started to measure the private against the public good, the rights of homeowners to refuse access, and the aftereffects of the sort of pesticide spraying managed in Contra Costa County, the glassy-winged sharpshooter would not obligingly suspend its biology to await the outcome.

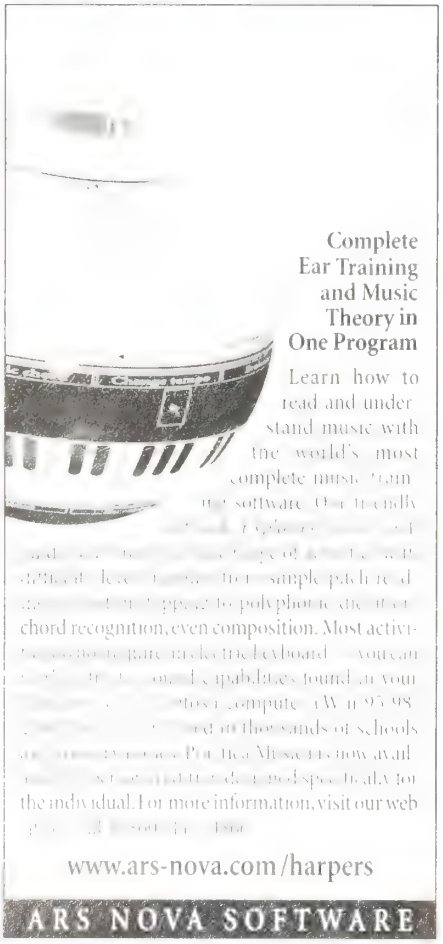
During the next hearing, a regional one at the Napa Valley's Charles Krug winery that was important enough to bring Bill Lyons, the state of California's secretary of agriculture, just such a possibility turned up. The local Prince of Trust-Funded Environmentalists, Peter Mennen (of the underarm Mennens, fresh from a victorious lawsuit that has effectively stopped the planting of hillside vineyard, despite the consensus that in the Napa Valley hillside vines make the very best wines), drew glares. Sitting with him was his notorious cat's-paw, Napa Sierra Club political officer Chris Malan. Perhaps because she had just drawn a letter of disavowal from her own club for calling grape growers "alcohol farmers" at the Sacramento hearing, Malan left the speaking to her patron. In the faded blue cotton and long gray hair of a retired folk singer, Mennen first challenged the glaring growers by asking if this were really a public meeting. They scowled and vibrated. Then he assured them that the glassy-winged sharpshooter was not going away. They gurgled with rage. Then he asked why taxpayers were paying to kill nature. In a coat and tie, the beefy secretary of agriculture made a carnivorous contrast to the reedy heir. Beaming, he walked protectively near Mennen and reminded the room how respectful they must remain of one another. When others spoke, Mennen and Malan, apparently present to impart but not to gather information, left.

Is the mighty monoculture of the wine industry worth spraying to preserve? Are the environmentalists unintentionally inviting in their own worst enemy, housing, by opposing spraying here? Will the battle over spraying end up in court? The townships of Sonoma, Sebastopol, and Windsor already have issued bans on any chemical spraying. Will such local legislation hold up against a statewide agricultural emergency?

In winter, the glassy-winged sharpshooter sleeps. The extent of its northern migrations is about to become clear. The hopeful say it's just too cold up in northern California for the GWSS. The pessimists point out that the bug has been discovered in Oregon, where it's been living for over a year. How long the glassy-winged sharpshooter can be kept at bay, how long it will take to control, and what protections can be put in place to limit the weaponry used in the forthcoming war against it will soon become apparent.

When phylloxera devastated California's first wine industry, fifteen years passed before a solution was found. If a true agricultural Armageddon kills or maims our current California wine industry badly enough, would we have that kind of time to wait? Will the rest of the world be able to keep Pierce's disease out? Australia has just announced a scientifically useless, if public-relations friendly, ban on the importation of California table grapes (glassy-winged sharpshooters don't eat grapes, they prevent grapes from forming). I asked Dr. Purcell, the U.C. Berkeley expert, if Pierce's disease had ever turned up in Europe. "Yes," he said. "It has been reported and confirmed in Europe. PD is in Kosovo. You can find all the details on my web site." ■





MYR

Today's Christianity offers a differe

The Bible, with 6 billion copies sold, is the best-selling book of all time—well ahead of its competitors, which include *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung* (#2, at 900 million), Dr. Benjamin Spock's *Baby and Child Care* (#7), and Jacqueline Susann's *Valley of the Dolls* (#9). The supremacy of God's Word owes much to the adaptability of its human marketers. For the hell-fearing Christian, the Bible has always been what Mao's pamphlet was to the Chinese Communist—the book you can't afford *not* to own—but even Susann-style prurience has been used to entice buyers: early American Bible publisher Mathew Carey spiced up editions with illustrations of the rapes of unclad women, even when the stories depicted didn't appear in the text. In more recent decades the Bible has been packaged, like Spock's manuals, as a book of timeless, practical life advice. Today's fad is niche marketing, and so the Holy Bible, like the popular *Chicken Soup* series, now comes customized for every soul.



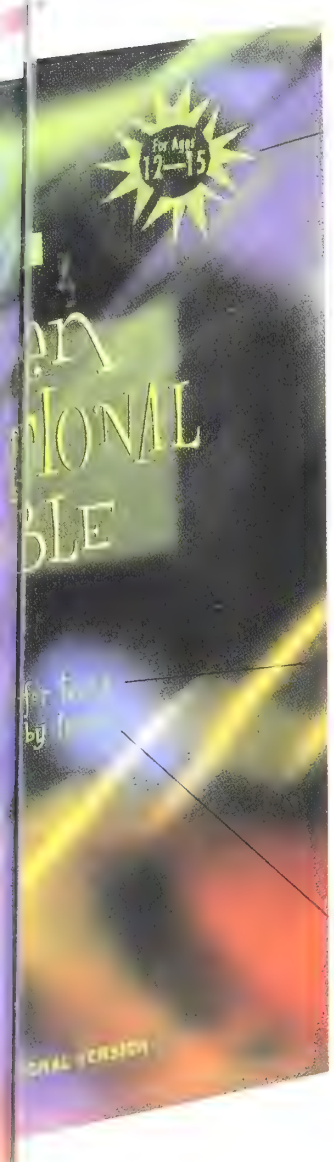
This Bible is made specially for teens. The translation itself is not new: the biblical text used here is the New International Version (NIV), a 1978 translation preferred by many fundamentalists and evangelicals. The "teen" element asserts itself in the bewildering visuals—including a psychotropic color scheme and a freaked-out, bell-bottomed icon (visible on the spine)—and the pandering supplemental material. For each biblical book, a two-page spread introduces the "Cast of Characters" and gives "Snap Shots" of the major elements of the story (Genesis Chapters 1–5: "God creates a really cool world"; "The humans mess it up bad"). Explanatory sections called "What's Up with That?" and "Hub" use assorted teen slang to gloss scriptural passages—like the Song of Songs, which, we are told, is a dialogue between "Solomon and his love-muffin."

With over $75 million in annual Bible sales, Zondervan Publishing House (a division of HarperCollins) is the world's largest purveyor of Bibles, publishing over a quarter of those sold in America and nearly half of those sold in U.S. Christian bookstores. Starting with its release of a successful women's Bible in 1990, Zondervan now offers around twenty targeted Bibles in all, including Bibles for moms, dads, Promise Keepers, and college students. The second edition of the Women's Devotional Bible contains essays such as "Men: They're Human Too", the African-American Devotional Bible reminds black fathers that if they tell their sons, "I love you and I will spend time with you teaching you how to shoot a basketball tomorrow," they ought to keep their promise. Zondervan's titles also include Christian parenting guides, children's books, and even a sex manual (entitled, rather ominously, *The Act of Marriage*).

RD

r everyone, *by Mark Oppenheimer*

This Bible isn't suitable for all teens—just ages twelve to fifteen. Zondervan has published a Bible made to be outgrown, like a pair of children's shoes. Its target here is the Britney Spears demographic, and so its Teen Bible, like Spears' CD, is virginal and a virgin, if her PR is to be believed. But teen publishers want a Good Book in a self-consciously naughty cover. The Zondervan higher-ups seem to believe that garish design and disingenuous pseudo-slang (e.g., calling the fracturing of human language at the Tower of Babel "the result of a bunch of total [sic] wackos when who thought they were way too cool") will bring fallen Christian youth skateboarding back into the fold. But it's a put-on, and most kids will know it, just as they know that Spears is, by way of contrast, "not that innocent." The teenagers who will love this Bible are already pious; its mechanical teen-speak will reassure them of a rebelliousness they secretly feel they lack.



"Devotions" are ostensibly prayerful readings in the adulation of God; but today, devotions and devotional literature are more often directed inward, in a sort of God-assisted self-improvement. This brand of Christian narcissism can be traced back at least as far as Norman Vincent Peale, who claimed to have derived his self-help formulas—which, he said, could "heal any personality of the pain of inferiority feelings"—directly from the Bible. Here the devotions are written by kids, and they read like Peale without the ambition: Amber, thirteen, says, "Knowing God loves me so much helps me feel better about myself"; Karen, twelve, advises prayerful youth to "[a]sk God to help you resist complaining, even when you're unhappy about something." Like their parents, today's religious teens are being taught the "care of the soul," the simple tending of an easeful spiritual garden. The King James Bible nurtured abolitionists, temperance activists, and civil rights crusaders; it's hard to imagine the teenage readers of this Bible crusading for anything. [illegible]

And so it has come to this: the Bible, once believed to have been written by God, has now, at least in part, been "written by teens." Today, the Greatest Story Ever Told comes in [illegible] and we can read it nonstop from the [illegible] the graffiti-ridden Psalty's Kids Bible (featuring Psalty, the "famous singing songbook") through the Teen, Collegiate, Couples', and Marriage Devotional Bibles, and onward through the Leadership Bible, the Devotional Bible for Dads, the [illegible] Devotional Bible (for twelve-step programs), and the Giant Print King James; all I need, more or less, at [illegible] Bible once again, this time for a self-absorbed and increasingly segmented America, Zondervan has done its forebears proud.

Mark Oppenheimer, formerly the religion reporter for the Hartford Courant, writes for The New Yorker *and* The Yale Review. *His essay about sexuality at prep schools will appear in the Summer issue of* Southwest Review.

THE SERVILE PATH

Translating Nabokov by epistle

By Michael Scammell

Translators are the ghosts of the literary profession, invisible men who don a mask and pretend to be someone else. Translating is a peculiar occupation, especially when the mask you wear belongs to a writer who is still alive, as Vladimir Nabokov very much was when I worked for him. To impersonate such a protean stylist would have been hard for anyone and certainly exceeded the powers of a near beginner like myself, but I was young and brash and willing to try. Nabokov valued me, I now think, precisely because I was green and malleable enough to bend to his whims and listen to what he said. And when in one respect I ceased to listen, our collaboration ended.

I met him forty years ago, by sheer coincidence. I was a graduate student in Russian literature at Columbia University, and in the fall of 1959 I rented a room from an elderly Russian émigré named Anna Feinberg. Anna found me unbearably supercilious at first and so insufferably "English" that she longed to throw me out. Luckily she couldn't afford to: I was the only one who had answered her advertisement.

My aloofness issued more from self-doubt than from national stereotypes, and my periodic arrogance disguised an inferiority complex rather than the reverse, which Anna quickly realized. "I am extremely pleased with my new tenant," she wrote to a first cousin some time after I arrived. "He is decent, kind and modest, and works all the time." It is immodest of me to quote this, of course, but it is relevant to another part of this story. Anna was especially impressed by the fact that I had studied Russian, had spent several months living with a family of Russian émigrés in Paris, and was reasonably fluent in French as well as Russian. "In short, I've never seen the like around here. And he brought a whole library of books with him."

Anna's letter now resides in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, where I read it not very long ago, but at the time I knew little about the nature of her feelings toward me. I did, however, begin to get to know her better. Short to begin with, Anna was bent even shorter by arthritis: the creases in her friendly face would often deepen as she grimaced with the pain of a sudden movement. Despite having a cousin and a few friends in New York, she did not like to go out much. One of her reasons for having a tenant, she told me, was that she feared attack if she lived alone. I told her not to be afraid. I had grown up in roughish circumstances in a working-class family in England and was sure I could take care of her (those were the days before the drug boom and the appearance of guns on every street corner).

Anna was fascinated by my stories. The daughter of rich Jewish parents, and a concert pianist by training, she would have had a glittering career if the Bolsheviks had not forced her to move to Berlin. Like many Russian émigrés, she had moved to France to flee the Nazis and from there had escaped by the skin of her teeth to America on the eve of World War II. She knew about privation and poverty but had little concept of the English class system that I criticized so bitterly.

We discussed Russian literature in the kitchen she let me share with her. I expressed, among many other opinions, admiration for Nabokov's provocative study of Gogol and praised the novel *Pnin*, his affectionate portrait of an absentminded Russian scholar at sea on an American campus. I told her that I was also interested in translation and had translated parts of Chekhov and Lermontov into English. In late fall I told her about my

Michael Scammell is the author of Solzhenitsyn: A Biography *and the translator of two novels by Vladimir Nabokov. He teach-*

st publishing commission, to
nslate *Cities and Years*, a mod-
rist novel by the Soviet author
onstantin Fedin. Anna made a
ce at the word "Soviet" but was
eased by my success. As I now
now, she also reported these
conversations to her
cousin.

In February 1960, Anna unexpect-
lly invited me to
inner. It was a
nique occasion. De-
ite our many friend-
chats, I had never
efore been through
he door that led to
er parlor and private
ving quarters. On
he night in question
knocked on her
oor, entered, and was
olemnly introduced
o a tall avuncular
entleman with an
dwardian air, a
lummy English lisp,
nd a firm handshake,
nd to a perfectly
oiffed, petite, white-
aired Lady, who
ooked perfectly ele-
gant in the perfect French manner—
Mr. and Mrs. Vladimir Nabokov. An
immensely tall young man, about my
age, uncoiled himself from a low arm-
chair and introduced himself as their
son, Dmitri.

Anna was Véra Nabokov's first
cousin, and not just any cousin but
virtually Véra's elder sister. They
had lived in the same apartment in
Berlin before Véra's marriage to
Vladimir. Anna had typed Na-
bokov's first novel, *Mary*. The three
of them had gone on holidays to-
gether, had planned to build a joint
summer house, and were close neigh-
bors throughout most of their years
in Europe. It was the Nabokovs who
had brought Anna to the United
States from occupied France. And
Véra was the cousin to whom Anna
had been writing about me, which is
why her letters are now in the Berg
Collection.

It would be nice to say that I have
a vivid memory of that first meeting,
but I don't. I do remember deep arm-
chairs, an oriental rug, vases
of flowers, and a table set
with fine china. But the rest is a
blur. Nabokov was basking in the af-
terglow of his huge success with *Loli-
ta*. The novel had turned him
into a world-class celebrity and had
made him rich. Stanley Kubrick had
paid an enormous sum for the movie
rights, and Nabokov had just re-
turned to New York from five luxuri-
ous months in Europe—his first visit
there since his hasty escape from the
Nazis in 1940. He was now on his
way to Hollywood to write a script
for Kubrick. More importantly for
my immediate future, Nabokov had
just come to an arrangement with
Putnam to publish translations of
several of his early Russian novels in
English.

A short time after that dinner,
Anna casually asked if I could give
her one of my translations to send to
Nabokov. I handed her a short story,
"Gusev," by Anton Chekhov. I re-
ceived a letter back from Véra, now
in Hollywood, to say that she and her
husband had no copy of Chekhov in
Russian to compare my work with,
but would I care to translate three
pages from Chapter 4 of Nabokov's
last Russian novel, *The Gift*?



"If my host and sug-
gests a sample to be
translated, since this book
it is, because you will have no
difficulty in borrowing a copy
from my cousin, while we shall
be able to check your version
using a copy we have here.
. . . My husband asks me to
add that the passage in ques-
tion is difficult"—"much
more difficult," she herself
added, "than Chekhov."
Véra wrote that pub-
lishers would pay six
dollars a page, a hand-
some price at the time,
and that her husband
was frequently asked by
publishers to suggest to
them the names of suit-
able translators.

The three pages be-
gan with a poem, which
I was asked not to both-
er with, and a passage
whose opening sen-
tences I translated as
follows:

A sonnet, apparently
barring the way, but per-
haps on the contrary,
providing a secret link
which would explain everything at
once, and I could withstand that
explanation. The soul sinks into a
melancholy dream, and now with the
peculiar thrill of overhearing of
events in the world they come out to
meet us: father Gavril, in a silk
pomegranate-hued cassock with a long
cape, his cheeks flushed with heat, his
soft hair curled, and with him a tall
dilapidated, thin and solemnly at-
tractive little boy—pink, awkward,
and lovely.

Yes, this was certainly different from
Chekhov.

It was a month before I sent back
the three pages, not because they
were so difficult (though they were
certainly that) but because I had my
graduate studies to attend to. Véra
wrote to thank me for the translation. "My husband thinks it is per-
fectly wonderful." "Pomegranate," a
literal translation, was amended by
Nabokov to "cerise" and later to
"garnet-red," the wide stomach be-
came a "big" one, and there were



VÉRA WAS A WAY FOR NABOKOV TO ERECT YET ONE MORE BARRIER BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD

By now it was the early summer of 1960. I had traveled out to the small fishing village of Sausalito, just north of San Francisco, where friends told me I would find the Beat poets and their allies. Oddly enough, at the very moment I was drifting into the orbit of the great mandarin of modern American prose, I was searching for his polar opposite: the literary avant-garde. As a young would-be writer of twenty-five, I preferred the "hot" prose of D. H. Lawrence and the young Saul Bellow as well as the breathless Kerouac to the chilly baroque splendors of Nabokov. True, *Lolita* had been pretty hot in its way, but it struck me as more like a baked Alaska: hot, sweet meringue on the outside, ice cold at the core. In truth, I was less enamored of Humbert Humbert's masturbatory monologues than I dared own up to at the time.

I was too late for the Beat poets (and too early for Haight-Ashbury). I settled down to a lonely bachelor life in my room in Sausalito (rented to me by yet another Russian émigré) and started on *Cities and Years*.

Véra was soon in touch with a "better plan" than before. Would I translate another Nabokov novel, *The Luzhin Defense*, in its entirety? The book, about an errant chess genius, was shorter and easier than *The Gift*, but the translation was needed "as soon as possible." I demurred. I had to finish *Cities and Years* first and would be returning to New York to prepare for my graduate orals. Véra came back with a new suggestion: Dmitri was overwhelmed by his music studies, so would I do Chapters 2 through 5 of *The Gift* and revise Dmitri's Chapter 1 to suit?

Véra already took it for granted that I would translate at least one novel, if not two, but I was still a reluctant debutant. Nabokov, it must be remembered, although an instant celebrity, was not yet a literary colossus. *Lolita* had been a *succès de scandale* as much as it had been a literary event. The nine novels, several dozen short stories, innumerable poems, and handful of plays Nabokov had written in Russian were completely unknown to the English-speaking world (and also to me), while *Pale Fire*, *Ada*, and all the later works were still to come. I admired what prose I had seen, but I was far from falling in love with it.

Nevertheless, I was highly honored and flattered by Nabokov's attention, and the six dollars a page spoke loudly to an impoverished graduate student. Véra sent the outlines of a contract. It was a wonderfully simple document, typed on one and a half pages by Véra herself. I would undertake to deliver a complete translation of *The Gift* within one calendar year and would revise the first hundred pages or so completed by Dmitri. But I balked at Véra's stipulation that the translation was to be "faithful, exact, and complete." How, I wanted to know, would the courts define "faithful" and "exact"? I didn't anticipate any difficulties between us, I wrote back, but "I would prefer to have these words be either omitted or faithfully and exactly defined."

This cocksure phrase seemed rather witty to me at the time and was a hint of the tone I was to adopt in subsequent correspondence. Like many insecure individuals, I was always fiercer on paper than in the flesh. Fortunately, Véra was tolerant and quietly dropped the words I objected to without comment. Nabokov reserved the right to make "any changes and/or corrections in the finished text" he found "necessary or desirable" and also the right to dispose of it as he wished. It was enough.

We signed the contact in August 1960.

At the end of the summer I acquired my first automobile and drove erratically to Los Angeles on the beginning leg of a transcontinental trip home. The Nabokovs were staying in Mandeville Canyon Road and invited me to lunch. We ate on a pretty terrace fringed with hibiscus, palm trees, and subtropical bushes that I did not recognize. Nabokov, little suspecting the difficulties that lay ahead, was in an expansive mood and professed himself extremely satisfied with his *Lolita* script. He warmly approved of my plan to write a dissertation on the structure of *Anna Karenina* and expressed his deep admiration for Tolstoy.

It was six more months before I

uld get to the translation of *Th*
ift, which, contrary to my hopes,
rned out to be a lonesome col
boration with the author. I started
in New York, did most of the worl
Southampton, England, complet
l the book in Paris and Milan, and
alled the final chapter from Dr
jana in the former Yugoslavia.
Véra wrote that it had been opened
y customs but had made it across
he border with no losses.) The
abokovs during this time moved
om Los Angeles to Nice (spending
he winter on the Promenade des
nglais), then to Stresa, Italy, to
hampex in the Swiss Alps, where
Nabokov hunted butterflies, to
eneva, and finally to Montreux.
We did at one point discuss a meet
ng to go over the text together, but
n the end it proved impossible,
nd the whole thing was done by
orrespondence.

Correspondence, in this case,
neant correspondence with Véra. It
s a commmonplace that Nabokov
never wrote letters. There were ex-
ceptions to the rule: the famous cor-
espondence with Edmund Wilson,
r instance. But it was essentially
true. As Stacy Schiff has shown in
her biography of Véra, it was a con-
venient way for Nabokov not only to
guard his time but to erect yet one
more barrier between himself and
the outside world. In my case, as I
later saw in the Berg Collection, he
annotated the letters and lists of
questions I sent to him, and Véra
wrote the formal replies, often repro-
ducing the exact phrasecology he had
used in his notes. In the three years
of our collaboration, I received only
three letters signed by him.

Much of the correspondence was
taken up with technical matters.
The transliteration of Russian names
and letters into English, to which
Nabokov would devote many pages
in his introduction to his translation
of *Eugene Onegin*, was a particularly
hot topic. Reading over Dmitri's
chapter after it had been corrected
by Nabokov, I had the nerve to ob-
serve that "complete chaos reigns in
the transliteration of Russian charac-
ters . . . particularly over the Russian
vowels." I objected to Nabokov's
spelling of "Chekhov," which sound-
ed funny to the English ear in place
of [illegible] I preferred "tsar" to the Germanic
[illegible] "czar," and contested a number of
other spellings that looked awkward
[illegible]

Nabokov, via Véra, responded
mildly to these strictures, accepting
"tsar" and a number of other sugges-
tions, and also sending me a copy of
his Onegin system of transliteration.
On the matter of "Chekhov," how-
ever, he and Véra were adamant.

[illegible]

I was riled by both the tone and
the content of this little lecture, and
after an elaborately polite discussion
of the pros and cons of various



Mere Brilliance

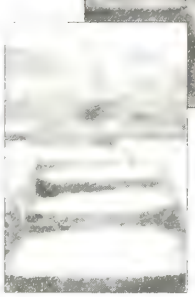
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WEEKLY REVIEW

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transliteration systems and their inevitable imperfections, I couldn't resist a retaliation:

> In replying to [my suggestions], you quote about five ludicrous spellings for Chekhov and refute them all successfully—but without ever saying that *I* never suggested them, or that I find them as ridiculous as you do. Nor do you anywhere quote the suggestion that I did make—namely the spelling I use above. . . . I trust you will not condemn me on the basis of some monstrous, mythical Tschekhov in the future.

And that was not all.

> You say in your letter that "it does not matter that Chekov sounds funny to an Englishman" since other varieties sound even funnier to a Russian. Forgive me, but I was under the impression that the Russian ear had been catered to in the Russian, and that this edition was intended for the English-speaking world.

There was more in the same vein, and Véra nicely apologized in her next letter. But she did not give way on the spelling of "Chekov."

Later we got into another altercation over Tolstoy—not the name but the name of one of his works. I had written to say that my dissertation was to be a structural analysis of *Anna Karenina*. "*Anna Karenin* (not *Karenina*, please!)," replied Véra. I knew what she meant. The "a" is merely the feminine form of "Karenin" that logically shouldn't exist in English. But again I dug in my heels. "Of course you are right, strictly speaking, but . . . Anna came into English literature and into my life as Karenina, and Karenina she will remain." I then (mimicking Nabokov) scanned the two names and innocently added that to use "Karenin" would be "like translating a Pushkin line accurately and completely destroying the rhythm." Little did I realize the aptness of that lighthearted comment.

Another intricate subject was the question of what kind of English to use for the translation—English English or American English? It mattered less to Nabokov's elaborately formal prose than it would have to that of a more colloquial writer, but the question came up more often than I had expected. I boasted (unjustifiably, I now think) that I was comfortable with "either dialect" but found it confusing to come across "tram" and "streetcar" on the same page, and later complained: "You have changed my anglicisms to americanisms and my americanisms to anglicisms—which way do you want to go?" It turned out that I was more worried about this question than Nabokov was; it didn't matter to him nearly as much as transliteration.

> American English, please, whenever there is an essential divergence between the two. On the whole, however, my husband thinks that the idiom should be more or less neutral. He does not mind at "tram" and "streetcar" appearing on the same page.

By the end of July 1961, I had finished Chapter 4 and by mid-August was close to the end of Chapter 5. Véra wrote to say that her husband was "amazed at the speed with which you work." I, too, am amazed when I look back. To say that I was inspired would be misleading. On the contrary: I wasn't moved by Nabokov's prose at all. I was too young and ignorant. I found its rhythms florid, mannered, and artificial, and its metaphorical tropes reductive. Instead of art being ennobled by its likeness to nature, nature was likened to a collection of artistic effects. This reversal of the usual order was part of Nabokov's originality. In his ludic universe, life imitated art, not the other way round. All was artifice and device, an approach that I was able to savor only with maturity. But at that early age I did not respond; Nabokov's prose was the opposite of the spontaneity and romanticism that I craved in my favorite writers.

What was left—and it still was plenty—was the novel as a glorious puzzle, a box of tricks that the enchanted reader makes his way through as he opens more and more compartments. In some ways it was a metaphor for the very act of translation I was engaged in, since every

at presents itself to the translator a succession of obstacles to be ercome. In the case of *The Gift*, hose narrative was deliberately ewn with elaborate traps and deys, the challenge was doubled, d there were moments when I seously doubted my ability to cope: 'our husband's text is so crammed ith nuances, so rich in diminuves, augmentatives, archaisms, ing, rare words, etc.," I wrote early n in my work, "that I despair of ver rendering even a tenth part of into English. A pale copy seems to e about the best I can produce." ut the battle of wits between me nd the text strongly appealed to my ompetitive instincts, and I did improve with practice.

On a syntactical level, Nabokov urned out to be surprisingly easy to ranslate. His Russian was saturated ith echoes of French and English, nd his sentence structure was very atinate: like Tolstoy's. Compared ith Chekhov (despite Véra's oast), and especially compared ith Gogol or Dostoyevsky, whom was later to translate, Nabokov composed sentences that were not ll that difficult to dismantle and reconstruct, and this sped up the work immensely. It was on the lexical level that he became so iendishly difficult, and here I truly floundered. One problem was that I didn't have a sufficient number and variety of dictionaries at my elbow in England to resolve the knottier problems, whereas Nabokov's responses to my questions were littered with "see Webster's," "see O.E.D.," etc., which offered an interesting insight into his own procedures. As Homer or the Bible are to some writers, dictionaries were to Nabokov. But even with a mountain of reference works at my disposal I could never have been equal to Nabokov's immensely rich and idiosyncratic vocabulary.

I was also obliged to rush through the translation much faster than I would have wished in order to meet our agreed-upon deadline of August. If there was an excess of errors, I explained to Véra, it was due to speed more than incompetence. I needn't have hurried. Nabokov was delayed by [illegible] ing and exhausting work required of him to finish *Pale Fire*, which was now scheduled to appear before *The Gift*, and he said he wouldn't be able to get to the translation for several months. In view of the increased time available, I offered to take the last couple of chapters back and rework them, but Véra said it would not be necessary. I was still hoping that I would be able to get together with Nabokov and go over the translation in person, and there was talk of a rendezvous in England or New York, but nothing could be decided until *Pale Fire* was finished.

Meanwhile Nabokov continued to answer the various questions and problems I had raised concerning the early chapters. There was one passage in which I tried to emulate the protagonist's rhyming schemes in English. "'Crying' immediately suggested lying and dying under sighing pines on a silent night. 'Waterfall' prompted my muse to recall some long forgotten ball. 'Flowers' called for hours about bowers which were ours," and so on for the better part of a page.

Nabokov carefully read through my suggestions and sent back the following: "*Letuchiy* (flying) immediately grouped *tuchi* (clouds) over the *kruchi* (steeps) of the *zhguchey* (burning) desert and of *neminuchey* (inevitable) fate," etc. I was not to diverge from the servile path even for a moment. Those familiar with Nabokov's eccentric translation of *Eugene Onegin* (especially his commentary) will recognize the principle. Nabokov's version was more faithful to the original's literal sense, but I couldn't suppress a pang over the loss of English rhythm and wordplay.

In Chapter 3, I encountered a characteristic blizzard of butterfly names and was completely flummoxed until Nabokov sent a list of equivalents: Malayan hawkmoth, swallowtail, painted lady, Amandus blue, Freya fritillary, and so on (a list that was just as beautiful in English as in the original Russian). Determined to do better later with a long description of mushroom hunting, I

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labored for several days and through several dictionaries to do the passage justice, but when the emended text came back Nabokov had cut the entire passage. Mushroom hunting is a continental passion that means little to Anglo-Saxons, so Nabokov took an uncharacteristically pragmatic view and simply erased the scene.

It was, of course, an education in itself to work with him even by correspondence. I remember one page coming back with a long list of Russian synonyms for verbs depicting light in the margins, with their English equivalents attached: glimmer, glow, gleam, shine, twinkle, sparkle, dazzle, coruscate, and so on. There were little lessons on verbs of motion (a complicated business in Russian) and extensive instruction on botany, zoology, entomology, and every possible aspect of natural history.

I am often asked why it was that Nabokov even needed a translator into English. After all, the author of *Bend Sinister*, *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, *Pnin*, and *Lolita* was hardly lacking in English prose style. I myself asked him that question when I visited him in Los Angeles, and was given two reasons. The first was that he needed the precious time to go on writing original works in English. After all, he was already in his early sixties when he made his literary and popular breakthrough, and he wanted to do much more. The second reason, he said, was that he wanted to spare himself the temptation of rewriting his early Russian books in English instead of simply translating them.

Both reasons held largely true for *The Gift*. His corrections did border on rewriting at times, but James Grayson, an English professor who has studied these matters, states that on the whole he did not try to rewrite this important novel but carried out a creative reworking of my literal translation. This can be seen, Grayson says, if the translation is compared with the translations of earlier novels such as *King, Queen, Knave* and *Laughter in the Dark* and *Despair* (all initially translated by Dmitri), which Nabokov rewrote extensively.

My own mission was to turn Nabokov's Russian prose into more or less fluent English without either falling into the pit of literalism or sliding into the swamp of interpretation. I was adjured to reproduce the original as faithfully as I could but was expressly forbidden to be "creative." That was Nabokov's prerogative, as he confirmed in one of his rare signed letters:

> Besides correcting direct mistakes I have dealt with a number of inaccuracies. In a few cases the changes are meant to simplify or clarify matters, or else they reflect my own predilections of style. I realize quite well that the odd turn of some of your sentences is owing to your desire to be faithful to every detail of the original, as I had asked you to be, but here and there you have been handicapped by not quite knowing the exact meaning of a Russian term, especially in the case of homonyms or words deceptively resembling one another. I have put an exclamation mark in the margin . . . merely in order to draw your attention to these shortcomings. The book is very hard to translate and in many cases you have found clever and elegant solutions. On the whole you have done a very good job.

In my general euphoria over the relative success of my translation of *The Gift*, and because we had not been able to meet, I tried to engage Nabokov in more personal correspondence. At one point I asked him about writers I thought might have influenced him, including Andrey Bely and the Russian Formalists. I also mentioned my admiration for the French painter Jean Dubuffet and asked Nabokov what he thought of Dubuffet's collages of butterfly wings. Nabokov's reply was succinct.

> *James Joyce*. I greatly admire *Ulysses*. *Bely. Petersburg* is one of the three or four greatest novels of our time. I have never read *The Good Soldier*. *Robbe-Grillet*. Best French writer—but have never read his manifestoes. *Shklovski*. I once committed to memory an essay of his on *Tristram Shandy*. Never met him. What is termed "formalism" contains certain trends absolutely repulsive to me. *Collage of butterfly wings*. A ridiculous motivation.

By this time it had been agreed that I would translate a second novel of Nabokov's, *The Luzhin Defense* (simplified to *The Defense* in English). In the interim I had married and I successfully applied to Véra—for the first time—for an advance to help me rent a small apartment in New York. Véra sent the money instantly. She was a stickler in monetary matters but always treated me generously. I was so pleased to be paid regularly for such enjoyable work that I was the least demanding of employees when it came to money, but Véra insisted on paying for extras, such as checking Dmitri's Chapter 1 of *The Gift*, and always paid my postal expenses. Later, when a long chapter (in addition to Dmitri's Chapter 1) ran in *The New Yorker*, Véra sent me a handsome check as my share of the publication fee, which came as a complete surprise. A realist might say that such payment was only just, but I was a total novice in those days and was delighted by this unexpected bonus. I am sure that my eagerness to please contributed to our cloudless partnership that first year, and the Nabokovs responded with great courtesy and cordiality.

I started translating *The Defense* in the spring of 1962, shortly after getting married, but the work went slowly. I now had a job teaching Russian language and literature at Hunter College and was working on my dissertation in addition to translating. Since my wife and I were far too busy to take a honeymoon, we delayed it until the summer. We rented a former farmhouse in Brooklin on the coast of Maine and I spent most of the two months we stayed there finishing the translation. Solzhenitsyn once told me that he read Karl Marx on his honeymoon. I translated Nabokov. I'm not sure which of us had the harder job, but I undoubtedly got the better deal.

The Defense was indeed shorter and easier than *The Gift*, as Véra

I suggested, and by August 1962 it s completed. The Nabokovs had ne on vacation. I didn't know here they were, and we ourselves d decided to drive across Canada d visit the World's Fair in Seattle. I took the typescript of the trans tion with me to await word of here to send it. In Seattle I heard m Vera that they had been butter hunting in Zermatt but were now France, and could I send the nslation?

At this point my relations with e Nabokovs were extremely cor al. We still had not managed to eet to discuss the translation of *he Gift* in person. Vera wrote to say at they had hoped to see me dur g a visit to New York in June, but I ad already left for Maine. Perhaps ey would manage it another time. Ve had also discussed the prospect f my translating more of Nabokov's us ian novels. I had recently hesi ated before signing a contract to do he first American translation of ostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* ecause of that prospect, but Nabokov had said to go ahead. There would be quite a wait before he first two translations of his Rus n work were out, and we could hink about the future later.

I had every reason to feel pleased vith myself, and when I mailed *The Defense* from a small town in Wash ngton State called Walla Walla, I dded chattily that we were there to watch our first rodeo. Vera replied:

> It was nice to hear you have had so much fun from your trip to the West. I hope, though, that you hated the rodeo as much as I did—all those blockheads on pool deliberately tortured horses . . . those miserable calves half-crazed with fright. Almost as disgusting as the corrida.

Without knowing it, I had touched a sensitive nerve. Vera's hatred of all forms of cruelty to animals. There was something in Vera's governessy tone, however, that provoked me too, and I sent off an impassioned defense of bullfights and rodeos that ended intemperately.

> Perhaps it has something to do with the masculine temperament and sensibilities. There is supposed to be an

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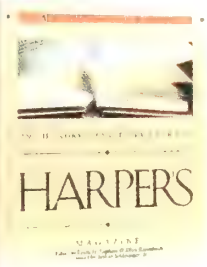
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[illegible] and I can certainly [illegible] myself from time to time. I was [illegible] to know whether your husband [illegible] with you or, that [illegible] he has at least one [illegible] predecessor in D. H. Lawrence (*The Plumed Serpent*). For myself (and this is said utterly without rancor), I find it incomprehensible why butterflies should [illegible]

His butterfly crack, with or without rancor, was indefensible, and there must be many instances of Nabokov being compared to D. H. Lawrence, not least him being asked about sadism. My [illegible] June letter brought forth an even more wrathful retort.

> Cruelty is probably the worst evil that exists, and ever existed, in the world, and in my opinion should be combated [illegible] both within and without one's personality. And sadism is the worst form of cruelty. Yes, my husband is with me in this appraisal, all the way. Incidentally, you do not believe, do you, that anyone in his right mind would be sticking pins into a butterfly? I am sorry if I sound didactic but I do think that logic is a healthy discipline for thought. But the way you reason one would be justifying [illegible] concentration camps and Soviet Cheka [illegible]

Vera had clearly lost her temper, but I was too bumptious and blind to see it. I replied:

> It [illegible] to distinguish between prison camps and rodeos it doesn't really recommend itself to me as a tool. I am not [illegible] the same way as you about most forms of cruelty around us. It's just that *I* draw the line at butterflies. I would rather see live butterfly than a dead one (butterflies *do* die, don't they?) and you draw the line at calves being roped and flung to the ground (although they don't die).

I cannot now defend my provocative comments on the sacred butterflies or the shrillness of my tone, but at the time, unbeknownst to myself, I did find one defender. Vera was in the habit of writing to Anna to check upon me or inform her about my progress. After our first meeting in New York, for example, Vladimir had come to the conclusion that I was gay and had continued in this delusion for about a year, until Anna informed him of my engagement. Now Vera wrote to Anna to complain about my intemperate letters. Anna replied that Vera and Vladimir were overreacting. "You completely fail to take into account that he is only twenty-five or twenty-six, and you are much older. You forget, or maybe you don't know, that he comes from a poor, and more importantly, a deprived background." Here Anna enumerated the various details of my English working-class childhood that she had picked up from our chats in her kitchen, and added: "I don't think he was ever in good society."

There may also have been a complaint about my translations, for Anna wrote: "How on earth could he ever have known Russian well enough to satisfy Volodya's demands? And why on earth did you decide to give him such an important book? I often wondered but never asked." And Anna defended me once again on the cruelty charge: "As for his remarks about sadism, I don't see any stupidity in this, I just think of his twenty-five years."

I was completely unaware of this exchange and continued to correspond with Vera as if nothing had happened. I had a long-standing ambition to do a full translation of Bely's *Petersburg* (only an abridged translation existed at the time). I wrote to Nabokov to ask if he would consider writing an introduction: his name would make all the difference in selling it to publishers. Véra replied that he "very much approves a project to translate *Petersburg*. Bely is a perfectly marvelous writer." Unfortunately, Nabokov was too swamped with his own projects to consider it. It never occurred to me to ask him simply to recommend me to a publisher, though perhaps he would have declined by then.

In October 1962 my wife gave birth to a daughter. Véra sent gifts, including a tiny loden cloak that has since become a family heirloom. The next summer we moved to England. I had been intending to read the proofs of both *The Gift* and *The Defense*, as we had agreed, but Nabokov wrote to say it would not be necessary, and with that our correspondence lapsed.

There was, however, an epilogue. Soon after my arrival in England I wrote a letter to the editor of *Encounter* suggesting that Mary McCarthy's marvelously detailed and sympathetic decoding of *Pale Fire* (a novel I did not care for) must have been inspired, if not half written, by Nabokov. It was a silly and tactless thing to write—and completely wrong. Nabokov himself was amazed by McCarthy's perspicacity and complimented her on it. Years later I apologized to Mary for my insolence and she was highly amused, though I doubt if Nabokov was.

Later still, I was caught in the same trap I had set for Mary. In 1968 a friend sent me a copy of *The Saturday Evening Post* containing an essay by the novelist Herbert Gold. Gold had taken over Nabokov's teaching post at Cornell and later interviewed him for *The Paris Review*. In his essay Gold wrote about Nabokov's well-known penchant for hoaxes and said that the name "Michael Scammell" on the title page of *The Gift* had instantly struck him as an invention. "Scammell" was an unlikely name and an anagram for "le masque." Nabokov had translated the novel himself and hidden behind this transparent pseudonym.

Gold was eventually assured by Nabokov that I existed, but his speculation was a fine illustration of the anonymity of translators and of my own anonymity in particular. I had just translated an extremely bad novel (*A Thousand Illusions*, by the not untalented Soviet dissident Valery Tarsis) for filthy lucre, and was looking around for a way of distancing myself when Gold's article arrived. Seizing on his notion of my fictionality, I signed the translation "Michel Le Masque," a name that is still listed in all the catalogues.

The masked translator thus acquired a mask of his own. It was pleasant to know that the supreme master of disguises was indirectly and unknowingly, responsible for the invention of this wholly mythical translator. And it is nice to think that our ultimately prickly relationship ended with a joke. ■

A BURIED LIFE

The pleasures and pitfalls of WASP reticence

By *Kevin Baker*

Discussed in this essay:

A Life in the Twentieth Century: Innocent Beginnings, 1917–1950, by Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. Houghton Mifflin, 2000. 557 pages. $28.95.



Liberalism is the only mature political philosophy of our time. That is, it is the only philosophy suited both to humanity's virtues and to its inevitable flaws, to its aspirations and its desires. This is one reason why Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.'s autobiography, *A Life in the Twentieth Century*, lacks the melodrama we have come to expect from the standard American intellectual memoir. The great convention of the genre, after all, has become one of conversion, usually from Communism to rabid anti-Communism. And the tedious, deterministic pendulum swing from treating history as a function of inexorable Marxian laws to man as a cog in the great, shiny clockwork of the marketplace is absent from Schlesinger's book, as it has been from his career.

"It is, I suppose, evidence of lack of imagination or of some other infirmity of character, but I am somewhat embarrassed to confess that I have not radically altered my general outlook in the more than half century since *The Vital Center*'s publication," writes Schlesinger, referring to the work that first fully defined his abiding faith in liberalism. "Perhaps I should apologize. . . . But in fact I have not been born again, and there it is."

Even more annoying than his consistency is how consistently Schlesinger has been right. He was right about the need to stand up to Hitler and fascism in the thirties, and right about the need to contain Stalin and Communism in the forties. He was right in refusing to join the fellow-traveling Progressives in 1948, and right in standing up to cynical conservatives seeking to exploit anti-Communism to their own ends. He remains largely right even today, in opposing the multicultural reduction of the American left to a meaningless stew of identity politics.

But, above all, he has been right about liberalism. Before the coming of the New Deal, the United States was a country of immense energy and genius—one perennially racked by economic meltdowns, labor strife, savage racial oppression, and gaping social inequities. It was liberalism that provided a viable system of liberty in the industrial age—that enabled (as David Fromkin terms it in *In the Time of the Americans*) the creation of "the magnificent country" those years when the United States bestrode the planet as no other nation has, enjoying undeniably the greatest confluence of human liberty, opportunity, and prosperity that the world has witnessed.

Kevin Baker is the author of the best-selling historical novel Dreamland *and co-author of the forthcoming* Paradise Alley, *to be published by HarperCollins in 2002.*



"I WORE WHITE GLOVES. . . . I WORE WHITE GLOVES THOUGH I WAS NOT A SERVANT. I DID NOT PLAY IN A BRASS BAND. I WAS NOT THE WAITER. I WAS NOT A MAGICIAN. I WAS THE ATTENDANT OF A MUSEUM. A MUSEUM OF SIGNIFICANT OBJECTS. . .

I lived in a city, as many people do, a small city, an unspectacular city, a not very famous city…The building we lived in…was dirty… and sprayed on its grey walls in red and yellow car paint were various messages delivered at night by some anonymous vandal. The most immediately noticeable being: *And even you can find love*…This was our home and we were even tolerably happy living there, until a new resident came."

This was a time when America helped dispatch the two great totalitarian ideologies of the century and sped the breakup of the old colonial empires; when its citizens blithely dominated the globe, not only through military might and industrial production but in high art and popular culture, from the fields of plenty to the frontiers of space.

Most of the stupidity and greed that were also part of the story—the ecological rapaciousness, the failure to aid the developing world, the disaster of Vietnam—came about when we abandoned first principles and turned over decisions to unaccountable concentrations of power. It remained the liberal idea that lifted the United States, and the rest of the Western world (along with parts of Asia) that it had rescued, up to new heights of human possibility.

Yet this is already becoming the forgotten story of the twentieth century. The standard, media-blended versions circulating since the turn of the millennium attribute America's superpower status solely to the vague triumph of "capitalism"—or that most generic brand, "freedom"—over Communism. This is a meaningless confabulation, particularly in a society that increasingly regards freedom as a larger selection of television channels (from a single cable provider) or the right to transmit code viruses, sexual fantasies, and blustery insults over the Internet.

"Freedom" can, and has, meant just about anything to anyone over the past hundred years or so, as Arthur Schlesinger Jr. discovered firsthand. His great contribution has been constantly to seek its real meaning, in such seminal works of political philosophy as *The Vital Center*, *The Imperial Presidency*, and *The Cycles of American History*, or to chronicle its progress, in such histories as *The Age of Jackson*, *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House*, and especially his majestic, three-volume work, *The Age of Roosevelt*.

In keeping with his central creed of man as a character possessed of free will, Schlesinger has been an unflagging partisan—as a member of the Kennedy White House and as speechwriter for Adlai Stevenson and many other liberal politicians. He has been as well an insouciant rakish presence around one debating table or another for half a century now. Here is the true happy warrior the historian as Cyrano—plunging joyfully into the fray against all odds and fashions, roiling academia anew with his 1991 polemic, *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society*.

Born in 1917, Schlesinger appears to have led an idyllic childhood—several of them, in fact. There are the early memories of shooting off firecrackers from the lush, green lawn of the family homestead in Xenia, Ohio. There is the move to Cambridge, Massachusetts, when Dad, Arthur Sr., an eminent scholar in his own right and an early champion of the groundbreaking "New History" movement, joins the Harvard faculty; the years growing up in a home full of politics and history, music and scintillating conversation, a home so routinely crowded with the blithest spirits and finest minds of academia that young Arthur initially mistakes the great western historian Bernard DeVoto for the family bootlegger.

There is even a trip around the world at the age of fifteen, a grand tour through the penumbra of the fading colonial world. Later, after Harvard and a first book at the age of twenty-one, there is a fellowship to England's Cambridge, just in time for the nervous year of 1938–39, the Munich Crisis, and the dreadful, unreal descent into war. And then the whirlwind—back to Harvard for more graduate work, marriage, family, and a start on his masterful *The Age of Jackson*. Then the war, and bureaucratic postings in Washington and Paris—another perfect observer's cockpit for a young historian.

The Age of Jackson, which was finished in spare moments during the war, won him the Pulitzer, national fame, and twenty-five weeks on the bestseller list, all at the age of twenty-eight. In it, Schlesinger managed to change the long-held popular understanding of Jackson's rise to power and the America of his time, tracing how so much of the gre

oulist contest of that era (level
al not from the celebrated, rugged
ntier but from the emerging in-
strial struggles in the eastern
ies. Afterward, Schlesinger en-
ed onto a brief journalistic career
ent interviewing the leading
nerican political figures in the late
ties, engaged in much intellectual
mbat with conservatives and
ommunists alike, and finally "set-
d down" on the Harvard faculty,
ng with his father—just down the
eet from the Julia Childs and over
e fence from the John Kenneth
lbraiths.

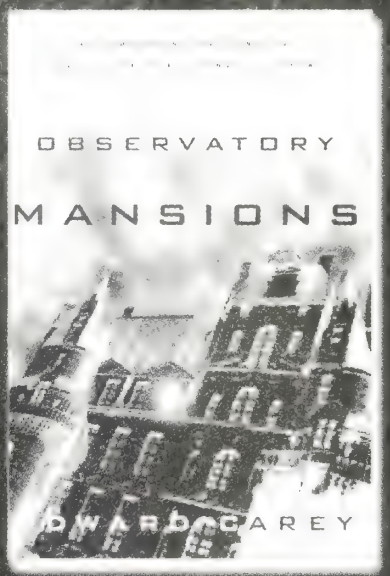
Such a life! We are treated to an endless succession of sparkling dinner parties, searing philosophical debates, grand theater openings; a parade of brilliant colagues and their dazzling wives oung Arthur gets dazzled a lot, one his more endearing qualities). But ere is the rub. Too much of *A Life the Twentieth Century* reads like a estament to the destructive power a diary. This is especially disappointing given that Schlesinger's ete as an historian has always been s ability to convert enormous mounts of information into brilant, literary narratives. There are me vivid scenes here, particularly om the years leading up to the econd World War. In an almost ovelistic passage, we see Schlesinger driving west across the United States with Benny DeVoto in the ummer of 1940 discussing hether the country should intervene in Europe as the car moves farther and farther into the heartland. On the same trip, a few days after the fall of Paris, Schlesinger finds himself at an evangelist camp meeting near Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, along a black lake, the waters rippling in the mild wind. . . . One first heard an indistinct moaning, weird ries rising out of the crowd."

But soon those weird, mystic cries ade—and back march the endless ists of plays and movies, professors and fellow students, favorite actors and singers, the dinner parties and the cocktails; the novels, the sunsets—yet very few skirts that trail along the floor. Herein lies another problem. When it comes to anything of an intimate nature, it is as if the author has—like his greatest subject Franklin Delano Roosevelt—mastered the art of misdirection through overwhelming loquaciousness. (*A Life in the Twentieth Century* is 557 pages long, with index, and carries the reader only into its author's thirty-third year.) It is hard to say whether this should be attributed to an ingrained WASP reticence or to a stoical disposition. From his childhood years, we are granted only the barest glimpses of any emotional turmoil: a camp report that describes him as popular and adds, "Emotionally he is a little high-strung"; a general picture of an adolescent a little unsure around girls and a little too sure of his opinions (as bookish boys often are).

We can surmise that the parental bonds are close; his letters to them both are filled, well into adulthood, with details of his personal and professional life. Yet aside from the wistful suggestion that his father spent too much time editing other people's work (in his mammoth *A History of American Life* series), there is almost nothing said about the younger Schlesinger's decision to work in the same field, no inner thoughts or conflicts—not even, most noticeably, about surpassing his father's accomplishments (at least in the public's eye) at such a young age.

The four children that Schlesinger has fathered by the end of the book, and his one sibling, a younger brother named Tom, are barely mentioned. There are intimations that his marriage to his first wife, Marian Cannon, is doomed from the start, but we are given little reason beyond the fact that she is five years older than he. When the book finds him stationed in Paris, in 1944–45, his descriptions of his relationships with both Tom and Marian reach almost laughable levels of evasiveness. There he has an affair with an unnamed woman, and his brother comes through town on his way to the front. Schlesinger's ambivalence about both of these liaisons is conveyed almost entirely through excerpts from a pair of short stories he submitted to *The New Yorker*.

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His impressions of [illegible] friends and acquaintances are more verbose but hardly more enlightening. He bends over backward to give a scrupulous, and usually favorable, account of nearly everyone he has ever met. "To my surprise, I found that I liked him." He writes on interviewing "Mr. Republican," Senator Robert Taft, in 1947. We are not in the least surprised, for Schlesinger has already established himself as a sort of Will Rogers of the political world, proclaiming his personal affection for everyone from Communists to conservatives, including those he has engaged in furious political debate. This speaks well for both the man and the historian: integrity runs like a silver thread throughout Schlesinger's life and work (and thus we are supplied with both critical and favorable reactions to almost everything he wrote up until 1950). This is not, however, why we read autobiographies.

Perhaps the historian's intent has been simply to leave a trustworthy, objective record of his time. Hence his reaction to nearly every treasured novel, every movie, every television show, every play—including university productions. But the usefulness of his cultural reactions, too, is often muted by the creeper vines of fogyism. *A Life in the Twentieth Century* is peppered with the sort of parenthetical remarks your grandfather thinks of as real zingers, such as how "gay" used to mean something else before homosexuals took it over, or how "man" used to refer to all of humanity, or why can't we call "Native Americans" Indians anymore. Much of this is not so subtly directed toward Schlesinger's most recent dragon, "the multiculturalists." A worthy target—but the professor more often ends up disemboweling himself with his own rapier. Most annoyingly, he possesses his generation's tin ear on matters of color, intoning as late as 1997, chuming with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Stanley Crouch and the *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert, I was cheered to learn that many black Americans also enjoyed 'Amos 'n' Andy.'" Later, he writes of how "in the tolerant days of my youth, the comedian Eddie Cantor could cheerfully go on in blackface and describe himself as the coon from Kuhn Loeb and Company." Yes, and that Hank Aaron fellow is certainly a credit to his race.

Schlesinger is always on much firmer ground when he writes about ideas and the great sweep of history. What ultimately makes *A Life in the Twentieth Century* worth the plod is the book's climax, when event and analysis finally coincide. This concerns the intriguing, turbulent years right after World War II, before the Cold War sides have quite set. Schlesinger becomes fully embroiled in the battle to fend off both Stalinism and the reprehensible attempt by the American right to exploit the Cold War for its own purposes, a battle that culminates in the publication of what may well prove to be his most important work, *The Vital Center*, at the age of just thirty-one. Here, in describing the road to the one real epiphany of his life, Schlesinger's thoughts and words ring like crystal.

First there is the Damascene moment in the winter of 1940–41 when, still chary after Coeur d'Alene, he is dragged by his wife to listen to an obscure, balding, middle-aged theologian named Reinhold Niebuhr speak at Harvard's Memorial Church. "His eyes flashed; his voice rose to a roar and sank to a whisper; outstretched arms gave emphasis to his points; but, underneath the dramatics, the argument was cool, rigorous and powerful," Schlesinger writes of that Sunday, sixty years ago:

> Man was flawed and sinful, he told the faithful. But mutually fallible as individuals, yet every sinful man had the duty of acting against evil in the world. Our ideals, as they were, could not just be our standing apart from the European struggle.

Where such ideas had been used before to beat a retreat to a conservative, Hobbesian view of society, Niebuhr turned them on their collective head. In his vision, the very imperfectibility of human nature, the very humility that man must impose upon himself, made radical democracy an imperative. The strong man, or the junta, or the plutocracy, could no more be trusted with a monopoly on power than the commissariat. "He summed up his argument in a single, mighty sentence," writes Schlesinger, and the sentence was: "'Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.'"

Modern liberalism had evolved in practice, like all the best American inventions, as a series of brilliant improvisations. Schlesinger would use Niebuhr's ideas to hone it into a "fighting faith." A nonbeliever, Schlesinger took up original sin "not as revealed truth but as powerful metaphor, [which] undermined absolutist pretensions and set sharp limits on human wisdom and aspiration." For him, this metaphor was a way of understanding that "Man is at once free and unfree, creator as well as creature of history; he has the obligation to act or to suffer the consequences of inaction." Schlesinger now adds a mighty sentence of his own: "His knowledge is fragmentary, his righteousness is illusory, his motives are tainted, but, aware of the precariousness of human striving, he must strive nevertheless."

In aiming for the highest of ends through the most pragmatic of means, liberalism would make the other, more "hard-headed" philosophies of our time seem ridiculous. Indeed, they now sound like nothing so much as carny grotesques of all these once "natural" laws of humanity, left and right: the invisible hand and the dialectic; the New Man, Maggie Thatcher's society that doesn't exist, and the state that withers away. In their place, Schlesinger and his fellow liberals posited a "conflict [that] is also the guarantee of freedom; it is the instrument of change; it is, above all, the source of discovery, the source of art, the source of love." And this creative tension is so intrinsically human—this acknowledgment of human limitations so exquisite—that Schlesinger, in critiquing his own beliefs of the late 1940s, now believes it inevitably would have undermined even the worst of totalitarian nightmares. For despite *1984*'s useful scare tactics, "totalitarianism in the pure

l complete sense was inherently attainable; and in consequence . . . alitarian states were not unchanging and unchangeable."

Even then, at the start of the Cold ar, some sense of this totalitarian inerability led Schlesinger to reject sterical anti-Communism and, in *e Vital Center*, to forecast with stunng accuracy the coming nationalis- splits within the Communist world. e was instrumental in joining with ner leading liberals to carve out that nter in domestic politics, helping to nd Americans for Democratic Acon and to make the liberal argument r Truman and against Henry Wallace's Communist-dominated Proessive Party in the 1948 election. At e same time, he refused to let antiommunism become an all-encomassing obsession and always perceived issez-faire conservatism as the *other* nemy within.

The standard to which Schlenger always returned was democra-, which for him "put the state up or grabs" and was "the means by hich noncapitalists—farmers, orkers, intellectuals, minorities—ould invoke the state to defend hemselves against capitalist exloitation." In thus seizing upon the ossibilities offered by democracy, chlesinger argues, it was liberals ho defeated totalitarianism, hrough creating a more humane nd just form of capitalism—though advocates of the affirmative state had to fight conservatism at every tep along the way."

Having defined the liberal ideal gainst totalitarianism and conseratism, Schlesinger has maintained n admirably fluid concept of liberalsm itself. For all his lunges at the nulticulturalists, he repeatedly criticizes his own work over the years for eing deficient in the attention it ays to civil rights, women, the envionment. Revisionism is the necesary testing of any theory, the scienific and humanist tradition in action, messy as it can be. "The very inscrutability of history refutes theories of determinism and leaves a margin in which people are free to make their own future," is how he ends *A Life in the Twentieth Century*. "Or so I believed then, and still believe now."

This is perhaps not quite enough, in light of the last few years, particularly when one considers that American liberalism is now very dead and shows every sign of remaining so into the distant future. Schlesinger's memoir came out too early to take note of the 2000 electoral debacle, but there were plenty of disturbing signs beforehand that the vital center could no longer hold. Liberalism ran out of energy a generation ago, and now even the basic political civility promised by George W. Bush seems irretrievable. We sit amid the wreckage of a political system crushed by money, smothered in cynicism, mediocrity, sheer animosity.

One has the uneasy feeling that what will intrigue future historians most about the American republic is how easily it fell. Consider that day last November when a mob of Republican congressional aides and hired operatives stormed a municipal building in Miami, Florida, and halted a court-ordered ballot count—thereby effectively deciding a presidential election. The obscure New York congressman in charge of this pocket coup picked up a phone, spoke the words "Shut it down," and the whole structure of American democracy collapsed like the empire of the Incas when confronted by Pizarro and his band of freebooters. What happened? How had the vital center been so hollowed out?

To be sure, our idea of the Supreme Court as a bastion of sacrosanct constitutional authority—largely a liberal creation—had long been whittled back down to our acceptance of it as a gang of shoddy political hacks. Yet this still begs the question. For all the rabbity "We will survive" pronouncements of the news media, most of the American public had already moved on—the whole election no more than an episode in the endless circus of spectacular murders, trials, sex scandals. Within weeks, jokes about chads were imbedded in our potato-chip commercials. How was it that Americans so readily surrendered the faith of their fathers? How is it that we now seem quite willing as a people to as soon accept, say, Singapore's

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"Asian model" of democracy (save for its curbs on automatic weapons)?

Schlesinger and Niebuhr would likely argue that this is very much within their conception of the vital center; that no victory in the cause of liberty is ever final, that action (and inaction) has consequences. This is important to remember—but it leaves us haunted by the specter of determinism. It could be argued, after all, that liberalism's great triumph came during a particular, limited period of favorable circumstances. In practice, it tended to rest on a "golden triangle" of big government, big labor, and big business—each keeping the other effectively in check, and all bolstered and disciplined at the same time by the Cold War. Take away the dire, foreign threat, remove one of the legs of the triangle—the power of big labor—and what do we have? Are we entering the era of post-democratic man?

In Schlesinger's one stab at the future, he gently rejects the attempt by Bill Clinton and his hired fetishist to hijack the vital center for their own, narrow political ends—"In my view, the middle of the road is definitely not the vital center," he writes. "It is the dead center." Loyal Democratic soldier that he is, Schlesinger attempts to give Clinton credit for understanding the vast change inherent in the digital economy and for trying "to establish a new framework for the computer age." But far from leading to a new vital center, Clinton's whole "bridge-to-the-twenty-first-century" never seemed like much more than convenient gobbledygook—a trite formulation that dared not speak truth to power (or anyone else).

Could this, then, be the true silver bullet of the liberal idea? Could it be that, having routed all the totalitarian ideologies of the last century, liberalism was bound to falter in the amorphous, post-ideological, naked-power world of today? We can only hope that an intellect as perceptive—and consistently right—as Schlesinger's will speak to this question in the later volumes of his memoirs. In the meantime, we will have to rely on freedom, now available through faith-based, nongovernmental organizations everywhere. ■

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

A new history of all King James's men

By Guy Davenport

Discussed in the essay:

Wide as the Waters: The Story of the English Bible and the Revolution It Inspired, by Benson Bobrick. Simon & Schuster, 2001. 379 pages. $26.

Benson Bobrick (an accomplished independent scholar and the author of a history of stuttering, among other books) begins this admirably clear and abundantly informative history of the Bible in English by telling us that the first question you were asked when you had fallen into the hands of the Inquisition was, Do you know any part of Scripture in your own language? If your answer was yes, there were no further questions: the stake is through that door. As the flames crawled upward, a cross was held before your eyes, to inspire last-second repentance, while angelic choirboys sang the dread "Dies Irae." William Tyndale, the translator who, more than anyone, gave us the King James Version of the Bible, was burned at the stake on October 6, 1536, though legend has it that he was strangled before the kindling was lit.

Tyndale's translation, the first into English from the original Hebrew and Greek, was the basis for the Authorized Version of 1611 that is still the Bible for most English-speaking Christians today and was the official Bible of the Church of England for 350 years. The task of the fifty-four translators chosen by King James lay mostly in tidying up Tyndale's work, the beauty and power of which they accepted as what the Bible in English ought to be. "Suffer the children to come unto me," Tyndale wrote. The committee added "little." (Bobrick gives us an appendix of comparative passages, like Dr. Johnson in his preface to the dictionary.) It was not until the 1960s that a New English Bible was introduced, making room for contemporary idiom and the evidence of more ancient Greek manuscripts (though there had been various revisions, called "Revised Standard Versions," from Victorian times onward, to bring up to date Tudor locutions that had changed their meaning in spoken English: "prevent," for instance, meant to precede or to anticipate; and "let" meant its opposite, to hinder).

English is not so much a language as a family of languages. Once the tongue of Bronze Age tribes called Angles and Saxons, it early began to swap words and phrases with the Vikings, who were also colonizing the British Isles. The Saxon fought with an "edge," the Dane with a "sword." "Edge" became merely a detail of "sword." The evolutionary tactic was always to keep both words. In 1066, Normans invaded and the same process went on: the "pig" in the sty became "pork" on the table; "cow" became "beef." It is as if English were an impressionable husband who had a Danish wife and talked like her; and then a French wife and talked like her. And when the King James translators took up their task, English had begun to add two rich vocabularies from Latin and Greek. Anglo-Saxon "dog" sported the Latin adjective "canine," and people who snarled like dogs were cynics (a Greek word).

Tyndale and his revisers were

Guy Davenport's last piece for Harper's Magazine, *"A Life in the Maze," appeared in the June issue.*

nly aware that an authentic, ar- ic English to which they ought ays to defer was the bedrock of language available to them. ey used only 8,000 words, 90 per- nt of which are Anglo-Saxon- nish. From this *word hoard* they ld invent words for practically all the Bible. The Old Testament is rdinately concerned with *eputii*, for which Tyndale invent- "foreskynne." He combined a rman and a Saxon word and gave "beautyfull."

The very first English Bible was that of John Wycliffe (1328–84), from the Latin of ome, whose "Vulgate" translation om Hebrew and Greek was com- eted in 405. Wycliffe died before could be tied to the stake. So the hurch dug up his remains and rned his bones. (They got his dis- ple Jan Hus, however, and burned m as one infected by Wycliffe.) ycliffe's postmortem burning in 428 took place on a bridge over e River Swift, a tributary of the von. Bobrick takes his title from anonymous hymn (taken in turn om a paragraph in Thomas ller's *Church History* of 1655):

> The Avon to the Severn runs,
> The Severn to the sea,
> And Wickliffe's dust shall spread abroad,
> Wide as the waters be.

Wycliffe's Bible was dispersed by inerant preachers called Lollards. hey were first-wave Protestants, utlawed and persecuted (Sir John ldcastle, the model for Falstaff, led Lollard uprising against his friend Henry V in 1414, and was simulta- neously hanged and burned for it). he Reformation bloomed from nany such seeds, broadcast all over Western Europe. Erasmus published is Greek New Testament in 1516, a scholarly rectification of age-old opyists' errors and variant readings, nd one year later the German monk Martin Luther demanded that the Church quit selling time off from purgatory.

The Reformation in full spate de- ended on printing. The first book to e printed with movable type, by Johannes Gutenberg, was the Bible, in Latin. The way was then open for Bibles in German, Danish, and English. Bobrick gives a lucid and orderly account of the many translations (so many they're hard to keep straight), providing us a sense of how they were genetically born from one another: Miles Coverdale's following hard on Tyndale's (and completing Tyndale's work on the Old Testament), a Geneva Bible (the one Shakespeare read), a "Bishop's Bible," on up to the one commissioned by James I and achieved by a committee of Hebrew and Greek scholars at Oxford and Cambridge. These worthies were anonymous until 1958, when thirty-nine pages of their working notes were found in Oxford's Bodleian Library. Bobrick tells us as much as can be known about them at this late date.



WILLIAM TYNDALE AT WORK (ABOVE); BURNING JOHN WYCLIFFE'S BONES (LEFT)

Their average age was fifty. They were all clergymen except for Sir Henry Savile. Revealed after 350 years from their self-effacing, "deliberately cultivated" anonymity, they are a wonderfully interesting group of very human beings, and Bobrick gives us charming portraits of them all. Here he is on Lancelot Andrewes, head of the committee that revised Tyndale's translation of Genesis through 2 Kings (and the only reviser with a recognizable name, thanks to T. S. Eliot):

> [He was] an immensely learned man who, it was said, "may" have been interpreter general at Babel . . . the world wanted . . . learning to know how learned he was." The son of a master mariner, Andrewes had studied at the Merchant Taylors' School under Richard Mulcaster, a classical and Hebrew scholar of note, and as "a great long lad of 16," went up to Pembroke College, Cambridge on scholarship, where one of his companions was Edmund Spenser. . . . From a very tender age, Andrewes was "addicted to the study of good letters," avoided "games of ordinary recreation" such as cards, dice, chess, or croquet, and preferred long solitary walks or the company of earnest students like himself.

Bobrick's description of the long-lost notes offers a glimpse of scholars who were working to forge, in a very real sense, the language that we call our own. "[I]t is intriguing to see what might have been," Bobrick writes. Indeed. Anyone who has been to a Christian wedding in the last twenty years is roughly familiar with the King James version of I Corinthians 13:11:

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"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child." The notes record that the scholar John Bois, a former child prodigy who was reading the Old Testament in Hebrew by the age of six, offered the following variant: "I understood, I cared as a child, I had a child's mind, I imagined as a child, I was affected as a child."

Translation is a metaphysical act: an incomprehensible set of words becomes comprehensible, or nearly so. In Sunday school I thought John the Baptist ate the succulent pods of *Robinia pseudoacacia* (black locust), which I and my friends fancied. What he ate was grasshoppers. My one contribution to biblical scholarship is to have convinced Reynolds Price to translate *akridas* as "grasshoppers" in his *A Palpable God* (the New English Bible still has "locusts"). But translation is also, strictly speaking, impossible. Ancient Hebrew is rich in untranslatable puns on the order of Homer's—Helen in the *Odyssey* refuses to say Troy (*Ilion*, in Greek); she calls it that *kakoilion* city, "dreadful." T. E. Lawrence managed to get around this by having Helen say "that destroyed city." The Prophets were similarly skillful with this kind of pun, as was Jesus when he changed Simon's name to Peter—"rock" in Greek—and told the assembled that "upon this rock" He would build His church (the pun also works in Aramaic, which Jesus may have been speaking).

There are other difficulties. In its original text as well as in translations, the Bible is the most evolved of books. Scholars tell us that the Hebrew text is basically two texts intertwined, giving us, in the final result, two variant Ten Commandments handed down on two different mountains, two deaths of King Saul. Moses gets two fathers, and stories repeat themselves in "doublets." David gets to re-kill a giant who isn't Goliath. Scholars have teased these interwoven texts apart. In one, God is called Yahweh; in the other, El. Scholars have further identified two other strands woven into the fabric: a priestly addition of rituals and a "deuteronomical" one of laws. Even if every one of these theories is wrong, the Bible remains a collection of books, rather than a book. The word "bibl is from the Greek *biblia*, plural of *bi lion*, "a little book." It is an archive a thousand years of writing.

For most American Christians, hov ever, the Bible is a book written l God, in English. The text is prophe ic, instructional, and devotional. Ba tists believe that it is "inerrant" (a nic tit-for-tat response by Protestants papal infallibility). A logical mind ca find itself in a bog. Why are we n told about the *other* creation of h mankind (the one that Cain marri into)? If Noah sacrificed two of all t animals, and had taken on two of ea (Genesis 6:19), how were there ar left? But in the very next chapter, G specifies that Noah take with him se en pairs, male and female, of the cle animals, with the unclean ones (no cud-chewers) still two. So Mr. and M Pig were on board but escaped t holocaust on Mount Ararat. Still, ho do you slaughter and burn two el phants? Two Tyrannosaurus rex?

King James's translators we working at a time when unicor were believable. They understood a legory, fable, and myth. The te they were translating was from a di ferent epoch. Only John Layfield h traveled (to Puerto Rico); beyon the mullioned windows of their O ford and Cambridge rooms the Ni and Jordan, Jericho and Jerusale lay in an unimaginably distant pa in which shepherd kings talked wit God, the shadows of sundials move backward at a prophet's comman and Solomon sat between golde walls with a thousand wives.

Seven hundred years before, th Anglo-Saxon Chronicle had dutifu ly recorded dragons swimmin through the air in Northumbria. Th Renaissance in England was as s perstitious as it was religious: th Irish had tails, Jews poisoned well the king's touch cured scrofula. Mi acles and impossibilities in the En lish Bible enhanced its credibility.

Tyndale was burned alive f translating *ekklesia* as "cor gregation" (rather tha "church") and *presbyteros* as "elde (rather than "priest")—throwin open the way for Baptists to worshi God in cellars and for Presbyterian

sing hymns in darkest Scotland
e hierarchy in Rome feared that
ing the Bible in the hands of
avers and grocers would fragment
Church into a chaos of amateur
ologians, wild enthusiasts, and il-
erate exegetes. They were right:
otestant sects have chosen a menu
virtues, vices, and fixations from
e Bible. (I know of a congregation
South Carolina that does not
ar neckties, citing Isaiah's put-
own of gaudy apparel that the King
mes Version calls "tyres," archaic
glish for "attire." "Tyre" and "tie"
und the same on a South Carolina
ngue.)

What Bobrick shows in his careful
rrative of the Bible's slow and tur-
lent translation into English is the
roic, bloody, and awesome progress
the Reformation that ironically be-
ot even more terribly oppressive soci-
ies (Calvin burned heretics, Puritans
anged witches, Anglicans drowned
ptists) while leading to deism and
epublican government. "One could
lmost say," he writes, "that the mod-
rn democratic state owed its origins in
art to a defiance of Catholic dogma,
but ended by adopting one of its fun-
damental tenets in the secular
sphere" — that is, we have accepted law,
with its traditions and precedents, the
authority once enjoyed by the Church.
A cynic can remark that we have re-
turned to the Old Testament, with its
proscriptions and prescriptions, its
judges and councils of elders.

What we know is that, at the beginning of the third millennium after the birth of a baby named Joshua ("Yeshua" in Hebrew, spelled "Iesous" in Greek, "Jesus" in Latin), the Bible continues to be printed in millions of copies. An article in the February 2001 issue of *Bible Review* cites a recent Gallup poll: 65 percent of American readers believe that the Bible answers "all or most of the basic questions of life" (though a third of this 65 percent admit that they've never read it). This article also reveals that a number of Bible readers consider "the Book of Joseph" to be their favorite, and that 12 percent think Joan of Arc was Noah's wife.

Walt Whitman and Herman Melville, agnostics both, wore out several copies. English and American literature from Chaucer to now [illegible] that its readers [illegible] Bible. We still picture, constantly and [illegible] words. It is like the flag, a sacred totem. There are many accounts by Civil War and First World War veterans of "lucky" pocket copies stopping bullets. It occupies a strangely awkward place in our culture: an unread book that many pious people believe is too hard to understand, an oracle (the belief that passages chosen at random have prophetic power) [illegible] into our time), a text necessary for getting into heaven. Our presidents are sworn into office by placing their left hand on it, though it [illegible] oath-taking. George Washington, at his inauguration, kissed it, and it was noted that the pages he happened to kiss are those in which Joseph reminds the Israelites that God will bring them "unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." Parts of it may be older than the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, both of which it rivals in narrative. It is tremendous. ■

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THE COMMEMORATIVE

By Myla Goldberg



Ernie has been freelancing for two months and nine days when Kamal comes up to him in a bar and says "postage stamps" into his ear. Ernie had come to the bar in hopes of making eye contact with a particular kind of woman. Eye contact is generally more than Ernie can manage.

"Postage stamps?" Ernie says. The bar is crowded. In a few hours, its windows will fog with body heat. Ernie is not sure he heard Kamal correctly. Perhaps Kamal said "toasted pants."

Ernie hasn't seen Kamal in a while. Kamal does marketing at the children's magazine for which Ernie is no longer an official illustrator of puppies, toys, and smiling children. It is a magazine that serves primarily as a tax write-off for the dentists and pediatricians who use it to stock their waiting rooms, a magazine to which no child in his or her right mind would subscribe due to its unpleasant medical/dental associations. Ernie left this magazine because he was sick of drawing puppies, toys, and smiling children, because he aspired to draw witty, incisive interstitial doodles for *The New Yorker*, because the blank canvases stacked in the corner of his apartment were giving him nightmares. In the worst of these nightmares, the canvases became blind men led by blind dogs, the whites of their eyes shining like peeled lychee nuts. *Paint me, old man*, says the blind dogs would hiss, the blind men growling and slobbering behind them. Ernie would wake up shivering, the canvases glowering accusingly in the moonlight.

"I know someone," Kamal says. "An old friend. I think she'd give you the job."

Ernie used to meet Kamal for drinks. Kamal rarely arrived alone. Ernie admired this about Kamal, the guileless smile and the Palm Pilot full of telephone numbers. Kamal dated only women as dark or darker than himself. When Kamal started arriving with two women, Ernie started leaving early, complaining of headache. He was sure Kamal was taunting him. Once Ernie had left the magazine, it was much easier to avoid Kamal and his invitations, which had grown oppressive in Ernie's mind, which had become like poorly veiled threats. Somehow, "Wanna hit Lee's tonight?" became "I can't even look her in the eyes" by the time it reached Ernie's ear. It was hard for Ernie not to hold this transmutation against Kamal, innocent words turned injurious by a desire so powerful Ernie could not imagine ever speaking it aloud.

[illegible] Ernie's secret word for them, for women coffee- and chocolate- and honey-complected, women [illegible] Ernie typically took uncomplicated, unadulterated lust

Myla Goldberg's [illegible] Bee Season was named a New York Times *Notable Book for 2000.*

education taught him words like "fetishize" and "objectify," shamed [illegible] complicated, unadult, white midwestern high schooler gawking at the black girls as they stepped off the bus.

"I don't know," Ernie tells Kamal. [illegible]

The [illegible] that Ernie finds Kamal's offer enticing. Postage stamps appeal to Ernie's [illegible] interstitial *New Yorker* doodles, at a level to which even Ernie had not yet dared aspire. The universality of postage stamps. The timelessness. [illegible] tongues, licking.

In the days preceding the job interview, Ernie racks his brain for the perfect stamp. The most banal day-[illegible] projected frame of perforations. The old-lady-hailing-a-taxi stamp, the laundry-in-the-dryer stamp. Ernie [illegible] lesser denomination, relegated to the backs of dusty drawers, called upon only for odd, bulky items or during those awkward transitional periods just after the price of postage has risen. Although he tells himself not [illegible] could mark a turning point in his thus far undistinguished career as illustrator and artist. This could be the [illegible]

The morning of the interview is unseasonably warm, throwing Ernie into a quandary. He had planned to wear his best and only suit, a three-piece woolen affair that on a day like today is guaranteed to make him sweat like warm cheese. Yet the suit Loafers shined. On his way, Ernie is treated to the man-begging-for-change stamp, the commuter-asleep-holding-her-coffee stamp, and the egg-bacon-and-cheese-on-a-roll stamp. Ernie's portfolio is full of pictures of puppies, toys, and smiling children. In his mind, his blank canvases have already been transformed, blind dogs and blind men banished by his newborn philatelic ambition. Years from now, Ernie will say at scotch-soaked dinner parties that his career really took off when his work started selling for thirty-four cents, causing sleek women in daring cocktail dresses to laugh appreciatively and touch his arm in subtly suggestive ways. As Ernie exits the subway onto the street, his pulse elevated owing to a combination of excitement and nerves, he can already feel the first beads of sweat tickling his underarms and streaking his sides.

The building doesn't even slightly resemble the kind of place where postage stamps should be conceived. Ernie had imagined something majestic, marble, and streamlined mod-[illegible] with burbling water, pampered plants, and historic murals; elevators practically floating passengers to their desired floors. Postage stamps could not possibly originate from this: a small, dingy building, its six [illegible] twenty-story buildings around it, its foyer dusty and empty—no security desk, no water fountains, no plants or wall paintings, and an epileptic elevator. Surely Kamal made a mistake—Kamal, who could not possibly have an in with the U.S.P.S.; Kamal, who probably prefers self-adhesion to time-honored licking.

Third-floor reception does not ease Ernie's mind. There are no postal trappings, no American flag, no blue eagle in sharp profile against a gold-bordered field of white. Instead, both entry door and office wall are emblazoned with the enigmatic letters TGPA. When a fresh-faced [illegible] fore inviting him to wait on a pleather chair, he is too emb[illegible] to ask what the letters stand [illegible] decides to hedge his bets. [illegible] inviting selection of *Philately Quarterlys* on the end table beside [illegible] least offers assurance that he [illegible] stumbled into a completely [illegible] ed office. He flips through a [illegible] hoping to find within its pa[illegible] meaning of the mysterious ti[illegible] There are no answers in P[illegible] glossy color display-photos of [illegible] The room is stuffy, the heat [illegible] in honor of the season desp[illegible] day's intemperate warmness [illegible] more casually attired passersby[illegible] infers too late that he has [illegible] dressed; the sweat soaking h[illegible] from armpit to mid-torso has [illegible] transformed the correspondin[illegible] tions of his dress shirt into a [illegible] skin. Removing his jacket [illegible] would be veritable philatelic su[illegible]

"Ernie Klemper?"

A smallish, youngish woman [illegible] gingerbread skin and almond-[illegible] eyes emerges from the adjoi[illegible] hallway to shake his hand. Hers [illegible] is clammy and slightly greasy [illegible] she had applied moisturizer just [illegible] to her appearance.

"I'm Gurdna Shagidi?" she [illegible] like she's not quite sure. "Would [illegible] follow me please?" Her voice is [illegible] tative, as if she were risking an [illegible] vitation to a dance and not to a job [illegible] terview for which Ernie is woe[illegible] overdressed.

Ms. Shagidi walks with the [illegible] tale slouch of the under-confide[illegible] under-endowed, her shapeless [illegible] making it impossible for Ernie to [illegible] cide which condition to blame. [illegible] Shagidi has overplucked eyeb[illegible] and a too wide mouth. She mak[illegible] the first edible woman to wh[illegible] Ernie has not felt instantly attrac[illegible]

Ms. Shagidi appears even m[illegible] nervous than Ernie, a fact that co[illegible] bines with her unattractiveness [illegible] put him at an unusual degree of [illegible] for an interview-type situation. [illegible] office is cramped and smells of h[illegible] hand lotion Ernie suspects her offi[illegible] cently applying. The walls are bla[illegible] except for a mass-produced Gaugu[illegible] print behind her desk, where p[illegible] sumably a window would have be[illegible] preferred. She offers him water [illegible] [illegible] in the same tentative t[illegible]

which she introduced herself, is
me would be entirely justified in
ning her proffered beverages.
he is almost feeling relaxed
ugh to remove his suit jacket
a mental note to keep his arms
is sides as much as possible.

want you to know this is not
ndard procedure," Ms. Shagidi
, her voice hushed, though the
r is closed and they are alone.
nerally we advertise for artists.
this project is special. Because of
recent unrest in the Malay Archi-
lago, we've gained several new
unexpected clients. It's impor-
t for you to appreciate that this
ject caught me by surprise."

Ernie looks at her the way he
ked at Kamal in the bar after
eir initial mouth-to-ear inter-
nge. "I thought Kamal said you
postage stamps."

"Of course we do," she says, look
at him with a slight frown. "We
present more than seventy postal
ministrations worldwide. The
ans-Governmental Philatelic
gency oversees postage-stamp ad
nistration, consultation, design,
duction, and marketing." Her
ice has grown confident, her fricatives flush with intelligence. "We are
e world's largest philatelic
ency."

When Ernie frowns, his brow
eases at a comparable downward
nt. He tries to recall something of
e conversation in the bar. He had
clearly pictured promotional
osters adorning post-office walls,
e actual stamp perhaps a little hazy
t the words [illegible] crisply
gible. "I thought you designed
merican stamps."

Ms. Shagidi laughs. It strikes Ernie
more of a dinner-party laugh than
job-interview laugh. "Oh, no," she
ys, smiling as if he has said some
ing witty. "The United States
ostal Service doesn't need any help
om us. We appeal mainly to small-
, emergent nations. The former
oviet republics, for example. Places
ke Azerbaijan never had to produce
eir own stamps before, whereas the
GPA has been doing it since
957."

"So, what you're telling me is that
significant portion of the world's
postage originates from Tenth
Avenue?"

Ms. Shagidi offers up another deep-throated chuckle. Apparently, she is charmed by Ernie's philatelic naïveté. She's leaning across her desk now, the kind of lean that would offer up cleavage if she were wearing a dress with a scoop or V neck, which she is not. The smell of hand lotion has grown stronger in the room's heat. Ernie can feel his shirt sticking and peeling away from his skin as he breathes.

"As I said, it's mostly the little guys who come to us." Ms. Shagidi continues to lean, her voice lowered to throaty, conspiratorial levels. "The popular global identity for places like Micronesia and the Maldives is often established through their stamps. It's a huge responsibility — not only for shaping international perception but for establishing a sense of domestic pride. A good stamp will give a nation a stronger sense of self, an ideal to strive toward. That's why I need someone special for this assignment. I need to know if I can trust you. Perhaps we could have lunch."

The offer takes Ernie by surprise. He inadvertently pushes himself back in his chair, causing the chair, which has wheels, to move toward the center of the small room. Ms. Shagidi's smile vanishes. She abandons her lean.

"Of course, if you don't want to go . . ."

Ms. Shagidi isn't looking at Ernie anymore. She is instead picking at her arm and blushing. Why does Ernie feel as if he were in his high school gym, bleachers and backboards cleared away to make room for a dance floor, a cup of punch in his hand?

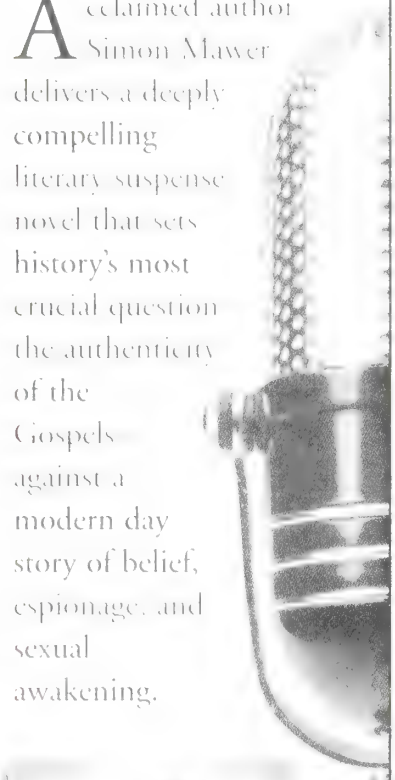
"No, I'm sorry. You just surprised me," he says. She hasn't even asked to see his portfolio. Perhaps the UGPA just likes to wine and dine its illustrators. Perhaps it is because Kamal is a mutual friend. "Lunch would be fine."

Ms. Shagidi sighs audibly, the sigh ending in a small, shy smile that barely clears the desk after being cast Ernie's way. "I hope you don't mind Japanese?" She gets up and then, still blushing, sits down again. "I'm sorry.

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Kamal's recommendation, I just assumed . . . Could I see your

[illegible]

they've been talking all along, as if lunchtime at a Japanese restaurant is something they do all the time. "To tell you the truth, I'd never given [illegible] much thought. But it's a [illegible] I mean, really good people remember it. They respect it. And once I realized that, the job became much more interesting." Gurdna has taken a beer-mug approach to her beverage, tossing her sake back like a frat boy with a Bud. Ernie thought sake was something you were supposed to sip. He is amazed by the number of refills the sake decanter provides, a seemingly endless stream of sake flowing from decanter to cup to Gurdna's mouth.

By the time her tuna roll and Ernie's bento box arrive, and despite his Sapporo, the nervousness that spared Ernie at the office has asserted itself. Somehow, his innocent TGIFA conversation-starter has gotten Gurdna talking about her arrival in the United States with a college scholarship and without her father's blessing. This strikes Ernie as a date topic rather than a job-interview topic, the thought of which is enough to make him order another Sapporo. In reaction Gurdna greets with a smile.

"And that's what makes you different, isn't it?" she says. At first he thinks she is talking about his beer order. "In America, a girl isn't called [illegible] just because she has a [illegible] She doesn't have tamarind seeds spit at her as she walks home from school."

He decides he likes Gurdna's approach to sake-drinking. Each backward tilt of her head reveals her throat, which seems slightly darker than the skin of her face and particularly soft and smooth.

"But how do you know Kamal?" he says, louder than he intended. He realizes too late that his question is irrelevant, that he hasn't been listening to anything she's been saying.

"We dated in college, only a few times," Gurdna says, apparently not minding the non sequitur. "We've stayed friends." But now Ernie is picturing Kamal, next to Kamal in the bar, Kamal's hand on Gurdna's leg. It is an image that makes it difficult to hear anything. When Gurd-

room, Ernie watches the folds dress as she stands, watches he move as she walks across the re rant. He's thankful he decide to remove his jacket

all

As they are leaving the re rant, Gurdna leans slightl Ernie's arm.

"Would you like to see my a ment?" she asks once they are o sidewalk, causing simultan surges of blood to Ernie's upper lower regions. He can feel his flush. There is a slight buzzing s in his ears.

Ernie looks to Gurdna, certain can sense his internal disarray her edible face is only shy and h ful. Her apartment is just bl away. It has never been this c this comfortably within Er reach. There is the feeling of fina of inevitability, of relief.

Gurdna walks quickly, her slo more pronounced than befo Ernie trails a pace behind, h down. He is simultaneously blu ing and grinning and chewing lip, his nervous hands clasped gether instead of swinging with stride. To indifferent passersby, t posture could be misc strued as prayer.

Inside the apartment, Gurdna ma tea. As Ernie watches her fill the k tle, she becomes every woman h never had. Ernie is sweating, tho the apartment is cool.

"I'll get the tea," she says, but s just stands there, looking at him.

Ernie's feet have rooted to t floor. His arms have calcified. H lungs suck at the air like it's t thin, like he has climbed to a di ing height far loftier than Gurdn second-story studio apartment.

It is Gurdna who finally travers the space between them. At Gur na's touch, Ernie's internal dra bridge lowers. He becomes the fox her gingerbread woman, nibbling her fingers and arms. There is a m ment of awkwardness when he tak off his jacket. His shirt is soak with sweat.

"It's okay," she says. She lights stick of incense while he unbutton

tosses the shirt behind the
ch, out of view, before proceed-
to her gingerbread legs. Beneath
smell of patchouli is a sharper,
re vital scent. Ernie is no longer
ne of his elbows pressing into the
or. A lifetime of anticipation ab-
viates itself. Ernie cries out. From
other room his voice would be
ily mistakable for a small ani-
l's—that of a puppy or kitten,
haps squeezed unexpectedly.

"I'm sorry," he says, gasping.

"No, no," she assures him. "That
s fine."

He reaches for her, but she is al-
ady getting up. Her body briefly
vers over him, an island of water-
oothed sand. He searches for signs
his brief anchorage.

"Take a good look," she says. "So
u'll remember all the details."

"Oh, I will," he replies, uncon-
nced that he hasn't lapsed into
a particularly lovely
dream.

Ernie is to design a stamp for
rami, an emergent island nation
thin the greater Malay Archipel-
o. Population 10,000. Principal
port: Peppercorns. These details
e provided by a reference librarian,
urdna merely having furnished him
th the country's name and her cer-
inty that he will not let her down.

He is supposed to generate only a
ugh sketch but is too filled with his
wn impending success to stop any-
ing short of a completed canvas.
think he once aspired to *New*
Yorker doodledom. When he thinks
Gurdna, he sees lithe hazelnut
odies draped in bright sarongs. The
linvas practically paints itself, a
gment culled from Ernie's waking
ream. It is a painting of a palu-palu,
bird found only on Kurami's
nores.

Ernie has never felt so vital, so
werful. He cringes to think of the
ars he wasted holding himself back.
e now knows that an artist must
ever deny his heart's desire. Each
roke of Ernie's brush recalls a mo-
ent from Gurdna's apartment, fancy
hancing memory's slights. Ernie is
retched; features are softened. As
rnie paints breast and beak, his
ind is aflame with images of an
even finer creature. Her slumped re-
ollections are deftly retouched by an
ideal a lifetime in construction. At
the canvas's completion,
Gurdna is perfect.

Upon Ernie's return to the
TGPA, bird in hand, a week's worth
of wishful thinking dissolves in the
unforgiving light of Gurdna's office.
This is not the muse who inspired
his palu-palu. He looks to his paint-
ing, half expecting to find it, too,
suddenly reduced. But the bird is
unchanged.

"Oh, let me see!" Gurdna says,
reaching for his canvas, her voice
giddy, her mouth too wide. Ernie is
thankful for the shapeless dress, for
the memories it allows him to keep.

He relinquishes the painting.
Gurdna is too excited to notice the
care he takes ensuring that their
hands do not touch. He watches her
expression fade.

"It's very nice," she says, her voice
suddenly formal, her features careful-
ly arranged.

"I thought you'd love it," he says.
She is at best a dismal, distant relation
of the woman he remembers, a third
cousin twice removed. "It's a – "

"It's a palu-palu," she whispers,
her eyebrows really way too thin.
"It's fine." Her too wide lower lip is
trembling. Her neck is so much
thicker, her nose so over-small.

He wants to snatch the canvas
back. *I did not paint this for you.* He
wants to say this so badly he can feel
his jaw tense.

"I'll draw something else," he says
instead. "A sketch this time."

He pauses, appalled, pretending
distraction with the Gauguin. She is
sitting very still behind her desk.
She's not looking at him or the bird.
He cannot believe this is happening.
He cannot believe she could be so
unappreciative.

"A sketch," he says. "Just give me a
few days." If she hates the painting,
she should give it back. He
deserves at least that much.

She arrives at his apartment door
later that night, smelling of sake.

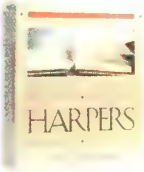
"Pretend I am a woman you met
on the street," she says, her words
rushed. Ernie's earlier flash-point

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anger is dulled by the unexpected arrival, by the lateness of the hour, by the sweetness of Gurdna's breath, and by a subtler, musky scent that erases his fatigue. She is standing quite close to him. "I pretend you wanted to sketch me so badly that you gave me your address."

Gurdna thrusts her face at him, finding his mouth. He lets her in.

Underneath her coat, she is wearing a tailored woman's suit. Its pinstripes turn her curves into angles; she is all line and purpose. Slouch gone, she strides to the opposite corner of his living room.

"Draw me," she commands in a voice he hasn't heard before, a voice quite different from the one she used outside his door. He hasn't drawn from life since college. He rifles his apartment for charcoal and a piece of paper large enough, is forced to settle for his sketch pad and a 2B pencil.

She looks as though she has emerged from a WPA mural, one of those proud, blocky women who face down hardship by staring straight through it, looking resolutely toward a future that cannot possibly be worse than their present.

"Perhaps if you relaxed your shoulders a bit? If you unlocked your knees?" But she acts as though she doesn't hear him. He begins to sketch. He is surprised at the unexpected beauty her stubbornness loans her face and body. Perhaps he was wrong to have judged her so harshly before. Features that previously seemed unbalanced now compel him: her strong mouth, her resolute shoulders. He feels clumsy behind his sketch pad; he is an adolescent all over again. He keeps rushing. He wants to be finished. He wants to tear off her hopeful suit and ravish her proud, imperfect body.

"Draw my arm like this," she says, holding it at an angle that connotes forward momentum. "To show how far I've come."

"Here," he says when he is finished, tearing the sketch from the pad.

"It's perfect," she murmurs, admiration in her eyes. She is all softness now, even her pinstripes curving, the antithesis of WPA refugee.

"You can have it," he says, reaching for her hair. She swivels away.

"No," she says, returning the sketch. "You need to keep this for your work." Donning her coat, she is brisk and matter-of-fact, a patient quitting a doctor's office.

"Where are you going?" he asks a little too loudly.

"Home."

"Wait," he says. He blocks the door.

"It's late," she says, smiling. "I need to get my beauty rest. And you have a stamp to draw." She angles around him.

He closes the door harder than necessary behind her. In her absence, the image he pictures as he touches himself quickly becomes someone else, culled from an edible world in which he is no longer mere spectator but prospector, determined to stake a claim.

Ernie decides upon a sketch of a peppercorn farmer. Unable to locate a Kuramian after hours sifting through the library's picture files, he settles for a photo of a Nampayan, a vine of peppercorns winding through his hands like a green-beaded serpent. They are not paying him enough. He multiplies his situation by seventy. Seventy artists churning out stamps for seventy countries they have never seen. He works late into the night. Each time he thinks he is done, he finds one more thing to perfect. He tells himself he's doing it for the sake of his art, that it has nothing to do with wanting to be awake in case of a knock on his door. If she returns, he swears to himself, he will not let her in.

When he next enters her office, she greets him with an effusive smile and holds his hand a moment longer than necessary. Her palm is cool and dry. In lieu of lotion, he smells perfume. She is wearing the suit she wore that night. Her stride is longer, her neck straighter, possibly thinner. She is beginning to let her eyebrows grow in.

"Do you have it?" she asks, anticipation trilling her words.

"Of course," he says, glancing at the sketch one last time. He [illegible] proudest of the face, of the achin[illegible] softness in the eyes.

Her eyes dart down to the sketc[illegible] and then quickly away.

"This is my fault," she says, he[illegible] lips pressed into a thin line.

"What?" he says.

"You drew a Nampayan," she say[illegible] "Nampayani have narrower mouth[illegible] and thinner eyebrows than Kuram[illegible] ans. These may seem like petty de[illegible] tails to you, but Kuramians are [illegible] proud people. They will notice."

"I'm sorry," he says, but he isn'[illegible] It's a good sketch. He has given he[illegible] so much of himself that is good.

"No, I'm the one who's sorry. [illegible] didn't think you would take thing[illegible] this far."

She shifts in her chair and gazes [illegible] her desk as if she could somehow se[illegible] herself reflected in it.

"The first time, you were s[illegible] sweaty," she says. "I almost didn't g[illegible] through with it. I thought the in[illegible] cense would help. And then, after a[illegible] that, you brought me your bird. [illegible] thought to myself, 'Perhaps he jus[illegible] needs a little more encouragement[illegible] but once I got to your apartment . . . [illegible] You are a slob, do you know that? [illegible] just couldn't do it again. I though[illegible] once would be enough for you. [illegible] thought you would be grateful."

Ernie can feel the blood pulsing in[illegible] his neck. He has the same panick[illegible] feeling he gets when he misses some[illegible] thing important—an appointment, [illegible] plane. He can picture her apartment[illegible] the two of them on the carpet. "Tha[illegible] was fine," she had said. He is sure sh[illegible] had been smiling.

"Bitch," he whispers, the wor[illegible] leaving his mouth before he knows i[illegible] is there.

"What did you just call me?"

He has never spoken harshly to [illegible] woman, never. Bile-tinged saliva fill[illegible] his mouth, a strange sour taste. H[illegible] forces himself to swallow it back down.

"I gave you something I had neve[illegible] given anyone," he says. "And now [illegible] you tell me I'm the one who should[illegible] be grateful?"

His voice sounds nothing like h[illegible] wants it to sound. He should hav[illegible] known this would happen, should hav[illegible] known to walk away as soon as she in[illegible] vited him to lunch. He should hav[illegible]

owed his mother's advice and stuck
us pasty-faced girlfriends, the ones
could never date for more than a
months. The ones with whom he
er went all the way.

She's just staring at him now, star-
at him like he's some kind of inu-
m specimen. Her voice is muffled
pressed against his spine.

"I suppose, then, that neither one
is got what we wanted," she says.

"You got everything!" he says. It is
he can do not to yell.

Perhaps he is yelling. She tells
m to quiet down. Her face is
shed. He suspects his is flushed as
ll. He can feel the sudden heat of
skin, his body a furnace fueled by
sire and betrayal.

"I got nothing!" she says. He
ould have listened to his mother.
put my job at risk, myself at risk,
d for what? For a silly bird paint-
g and a sketch of an ugly old
n." She shakes her head. "Mami
uld have been so pleased," she
ys. "Papi would have pretended
t to recognize me after I left, he
ld a funeral—but even Papi would
hold no power over a
stamp."

Ernie decides to return to the
r. Kamal will be there with a
oman. Ernie will sit down at their
ble and look the woman in the
yes. He will focus his energy, his
ewfound artistic license, upon this
oman. She will feel overwhelmed,
ill have no choice but to go home
ith him. Alone with his Palm Pilot,
aybe Kamal will think twice before
fering Ernie his leftovers again.

It's a good thirty blocks to the bar
om the TGPA building, but Ernie
as no interest in taking the subway.
e needs to walk, needs to feel his
uscles flexing, the sidewalk submit-
ng to his tread. At first Gurdna in-
abits every footfall, her scorn for Ernie
flected in the hardness of the pave-
ent, the animosity of a car horn, the
owl of a passing bicyclist. With every
ep, her presence fades. By block fif-
en, she is nowhere in the vibrant or-
nge of a produce-stand persimmon or
ne jingling bells of a child's blue knit
ap. Hers is not the voice of the taxis,
uses, and pedestrians jockeying for
osition. Ernie smiles. Gurdna was a



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M	E	R	I	T	S	A	S	C	E	N	D	

NOTES FOR "SIXES AND SEVENS—REVISITED"

Puzzle written for Dave Vincent. A big tip of the hat to "Word Circus" by Richard Lederer for some of the answers.

Answers are indicated with an asterisk (*).

ACROSS: 11. Di-or; 12. B(m)[eet me]bohr, rev.; 16. [illegible] 24. [illegible] 27. [illegible] range

DOWNS: [illegible] 4. rev.; 7. *; 9. (p)arson; 24. hare-m; 25. hidden; 26. *; 28. bee[illegible]

SIX-LETTER WORDS: a. ascend*; b. p(lent)y; c. DE-cent*; d. arm-a-D.A.; e. pseudo*; f. out-lay; g. merits*; h. P.U.-sh-up; i. L-(YN-xes) rev.; j. aughts (pun), k. steely—I have cholesterol; l. [illegible]

SEVEN-LETTER WORDS: m. ro(rev.)-gu(ER)y; n. (a-SSU)[rev.]-red; o. (pan)[rev.] venu(e); p. rock-ets*; q. dog-face; r. elec-tee; s. e.g.-(gno)[g]s), rev.; t. EP-is-ode, u. F-rot[I]ca, rev.; v. inques*-t; w. spreads, two rings; x. execut(IV)e

mosquito at his ear, a fly in his fruit salad, and now she has been shooed away, freeing him to reap life's rich bounty. After all, he is an artist living in a city where women outnumber men by almost two to one. He can take his pick.

As Ernie nears the bar, he plans his entrance. He will open the door in a single, fluid motion. Looking neither left nor right, he will coolly saunter over to the stool and sit. Let Kamal come to him. Kamal, who time and time again has watched Ernie retreat from opportunity with his tail between his legs; Kamal, who tonight will learn that Ernie is no longer a boy who fears the smell of meat.

Thirty blocks of self-empowerment expire with Ernie's masterful bar-entrance maneuver. It is a Wednesday. In the far right corner, a television Ernie never noticed before is tuned to a prime time sitcom, the closed captioning option engaged. All six people in the bar have positioned themselves in relation to the television screen. The bar reverberates with television banter and the scripted laughter of a live studio audience. The closed captioning dutifully reports [Laughter].

Of the six people in the bar, four are men and two are women. The woman who catches Ernie's eye has skin the color of perfectly toasted bread. Ernie sits a seat away and orders a beer. He looks straight ahead, certain of his magnetism.

Ernie darts a quick glance in the woman's direction. She is still rapt in the TV. Ernie's inner artist commands him to fill the seat between them and hand the golden-toast woman his beer, a smile on his face. His will be the suave smile no woman can resist, the smile that says, *I know what you want*, without actually saying a word.

Ernie fixes his eyes on the television screen. He will wait for a commercial break.

"Hi," he says once the image of a stylish urban apartment has been replaced by the image of a hamburger. It is a phrase he has rejected in his improvisation. "Hi" lacks the formality and the finality that he had intended to say until "Hi" popped out, a small golden egg.

"Hi," the woman replies, still facing the screen. The hamburger has been replaced by a luxury car, a commercial set solely to [Music].

"Can I buy you a drink?" Ernie says, his voice calm, assured, entirely squeakless. His stomach feels fluttery but not unbearably so. It is actually rather pleasant, an excited flutter rather than the expected on-the-verge-of-illness flutter. Will she say yes or will she say no? It is a moment of infinite possibility that Ernie has single-handedly called into being.

The woman turns toward Ernie. She looks at his shirt instead of his face. Ernie suddenly pictures *Can I buy you a drink?* appearing below him, the words small and vulnerable, blazing white.

"I'm not gonna go home with you," the woman says.

Ernie's lips contract into a small, surprised O. [Music] is replaced by words. The light in the bar is dim. Ernie's barstool has an uneven leg. If he shifts his weight even a little, the stool tips. Down. Up. Down. Up. Ernie's heart is beating very fast. The woman's eyes are tired. Ernie could just push himself away from the bar. He could just grab the woman and kiss her.

"That's okay," Ernie says, the words glowing strange and unexpected somewhere in the vicinity of his fourth button. "It's just a drink."

The woman shrugs. "Anything on draft is fine," she says. She returns her attention to the prime time comedy program.

Ernie orders Heinekens. He drinks his predominantly during commercial breaks. A few televised scenes are funny enough to make him laugh out loud. During one of the scenes—not the funniest, if you ask Ernie, but a pretty funny one—the woman laughs, too. By the end of the show, Ernie has drunk the last of his beer. He goes home.

The sketch is where Ernie dropped it the night Gurdna left, on the floor to the left of the front door. The air current created by Ernie's reentry propels the sketch in a way that at first appears mouselike in Ernie's peripheral vision. The drawing is already covered with a thin layer of dust, but this does not dull the vibrancy of the figure, an energy inadvertently captured by the impatience of Ernie's pencil. There is such fierce determination in the figure's stance, such unmistakable hopefulness in the forward-thrusting angle of the arm.

It only takes a few days: the transfer of sketch to canvas, the application of color. In the spirit of conciliation, Ernie paints perforations along the edges of the canvas. Just before he finishes, the TGPA check arrives with a letter thanking him for the palu-palu and promising further assignments as they arise. The letter is not signed by her. Ernie calls Gurdna's office but is informed that she is no longer with the firm.

Ernie calls Kamal. Kamal claims no knowledge of Gurdna's home phone or address. Ernie doesn't believe him but knows it would be pointless to say so.

They hang up promising far too earnestly to keep in touch.

May Index Sources

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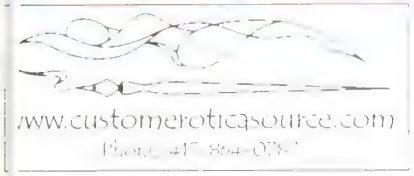
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"Serbs, having thrown off their dictator, were waiting, in the dark, for international aid to help them pay for electricity. Oklahoma was running low on power again. Maine's wild Atlantic salmon was placed on the endangered species list, to the dismay of Maine's Atlantic salmon fishermen. Boston banned mercury thermometers, each of which contains 0.7 grams of the toxin, enough to contaminate a small lake. Russia decided to go ahead and crash the space station Mir into the Pacific Ocean, disappointing Dennis Tito, an American businessman who had hoped to pay $20 million to visit the [illegible] station, and television executives, who were planning to film a 'reality-based' television program there. China banned a gathering of poets. A robot successfully tended the mind of a maiden."

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LETTERS

Continued from page 6

14001. Audits are conducted by third-party inspectors, and the farms undergo annual reviews to encourage continuous improvement in environmental protection.

The authors also fail to mention other important functions of the flower farms in their communities—financing schools, for example. Jobs at Dole are considered to be among the best, and best compensated, in the country. Dole employees value their jobs and find that they offer the opportunity to build a better life for their families and their communities.

Sharon Hayes
Dole Food Company, Inc.
Westlake Village, Calif.

Many of us in the floral industry who deal regularly with farms in South America were disappointed with "Fleurs du Mal." Maharaj and Hohn apparently wish to portray the flower industry as controlled by wealthy corporations that exploit workers and abuse the environment. Although the authors are entitled to their one-sided opinion, they base their argument on factual inaccuracies and omissions.

Let me provide one example. The article states that "corporate producers with high volume and low labor costs such as Dole, can still make millions on slim margins, but small flower farms are failing worldwide." Dole entered the floral industry in 1998 by buying several existing companies that owned farms in South America. Since then Dole has, in the aggregate, lost money. The fresh-cut flowers division of Dole reported a loss for 1999 (before interest and taxes) of $4.886 million. The company similarly has reported a loss for the first nine months of 2000. This is a matter of public record. It should also be noted that Dole is the only company of its size that runs flower farms in South America. Your article implies otherwise.

William Armellini
Orlando, Fla.

Donovan Hohn responds:
The International Labour Organi-

:on does indeed report that "ir-:ly-recruited" workers in the flower :istry earn wages on average better :n the squalid Colombian minimum, :h amounted to $130 a month last :. According to CEO Moran, most :er workers earn "one and a half :s the minimum wage" — or $195 a :nth. Niala Maharaj and I do not :e otherwise. We write that they :n "under $200 a month." Either :y, the estimate is almost uncon-:nably conservative. Entry-level :enhouse laborers earn average wages :rely equal to the legal minimum, : ILO reports. Those hired through : contractors often work for even less : without benefits as basic as social :urity. Moreover, by Colombian gov-:ment estimates the cost of living :a low-income family is *two and a half :es the minimum wage*. As a result, :plains the U.S. State Department's :st Human Rights Report on :olombia, "Children as young as 11 :ars of age work full time in almost :ery aspect of the cut flower indus-:" — earning less than *half* the mini-:m wage—"as a way to supplement :mily income."

True, Colombia has "clear and strin-:nt legislation" on agrochemical prod-:ts—as it does on narcotic products. :cording to the ILO, industry promis-: to improve occupational safety and :vironmental practices have not been : companied by "systematic evalua-:n of the results achieved and of the :servance of legal tests in this respect." :cording to the State Department, :organized agricultural workers com-:only "fear the loss of their jobs if they :ercise their right to criticize abuses."

Yes, studies have found little differ-:ce in the *frequency* of health prob-:ms reported by those flower workers :ho "handle" pesticides and those who :erely handle pesticide-covered flow-:s growing in poorly ventilated and oft :migated greenhouses. Difference in :e *severity* of their health problems, :owever, is another matter, as is the :fference in both frequency and sever-:y of symptoms reported by flower :orkers and by the general popula-:on. Independent investigations con-:ucted as recently as last year have :ocumented high rates of pesticide in-:oxication on Latin American flower :arms, as well as the illegal use of banned or heavily restricted toxins, carcinogens, and teratogens.

Florverde, a new, voluntary, industry-run program, is, nonetheless, a sign of progress. But no Colombian growers have been certified by any of the major independent labeling programs. In Ecuador, only 20 percent of flower farms have met the environmental and labor standards of one of these, the German Flower Label Programme (FLP), since it began inspecting greenhouses there in 1997. ISO 14001, like Florverde, is an industry-run program, more effective in remediating bad publicity and liability-insurance costs than in remediating damage to the environment. It addresses neither working conditions nor labor rights, and its "third-party inspectors" include for-profit, industry-selected certifiers that provide not accountability so much as, in the words of one "certifying body," Moody International, "a cost-effective means of attaining certification by utilizing auditors who have been selected for their experience and friendly audit approach to assure you will get a stress-free, value-added audit."

FLP-labeled Ecuadoran flowers command an average premium of up to 30 percent on the German market. But as long as most Latin American flowers are sold to indifferent Americans, most growers cannot afford to change. How many of the SAF's 15,000 members make a point of buying Florverde flowers or offer consumers the same choice? According to the FLP, the lack of an American market for certified flowers is among the top reasons growers give for not improving their practices.

Dole Food Inc., which made $49 million in profits in 1999, attributes the $5 million in net losses that Dole Fresh Flowers suffered that year—after taking in, mind you, $3 million in earnings before taxes in the last half of 1998, its first six months in business—primarily to the one-time cost of consolidating a $332-million empire of new acquisitions. The 1999 figures reflect net investments, in other words, not net losses. No other flower producer in Latin America is as big as Dole, but large growers do dominate. "Today few farms of less than 5 hectares can survive," reports the ILO, "mainly for reasons of economies of scale."



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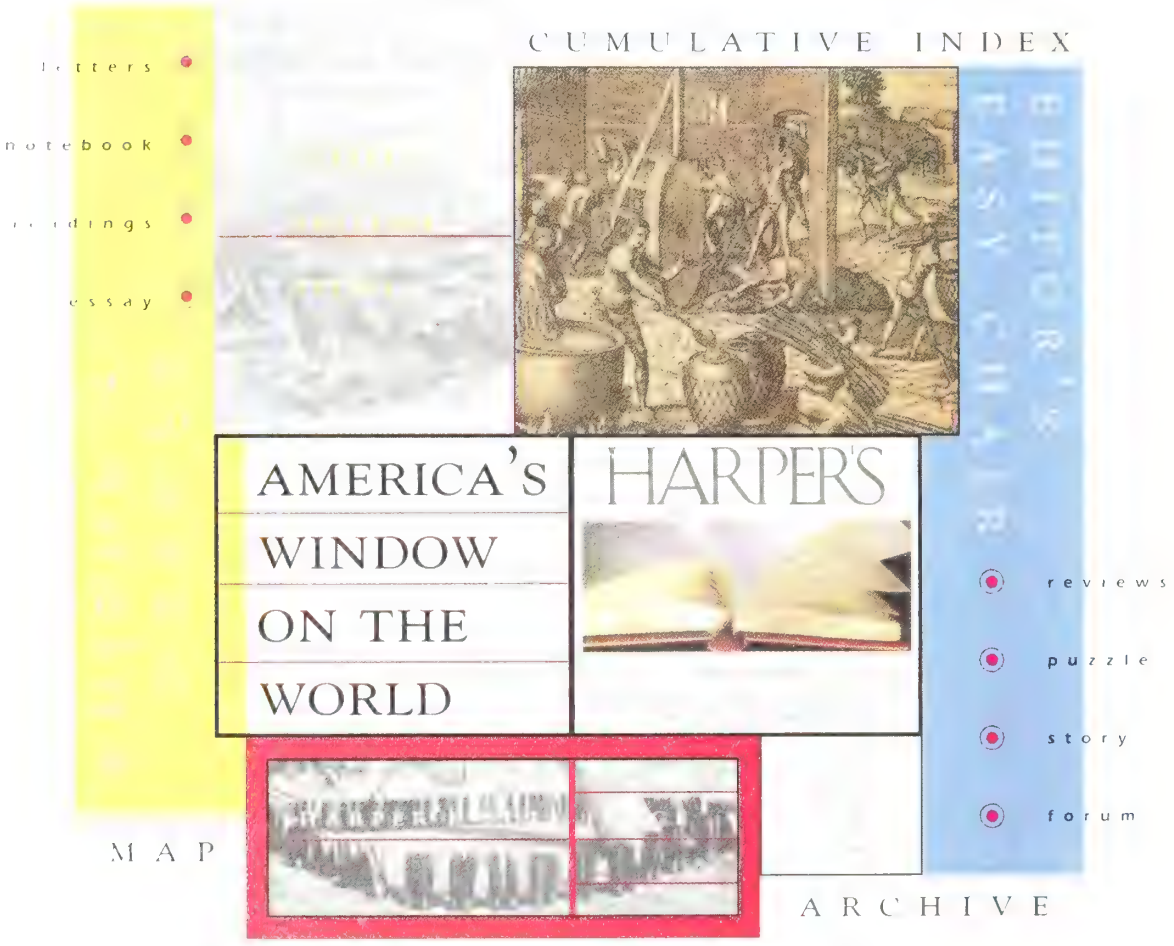
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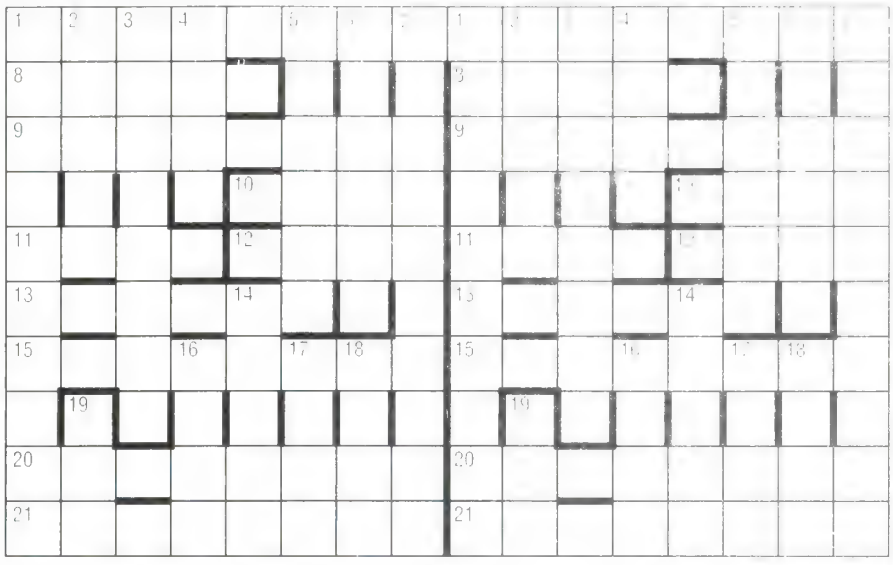
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PUZZLE



Head/Lines

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.
(with acknowledgments to The Listener *and Stephen Sondheim)*

The diagram represents two pages of a newspaper. Each "headline" is actually two clues written consecutively with no connecting words and no overlapping. One answer is to be entered in the left "page," one in the right, but either may be clued first. The unclued banner headline at 1 Across, an appropriate phrase that reads across both pages, will distinguish which [illegible]. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 77.

Across

1. *(see instructions)*
8. PROBLEMATIC SOLAR TESTS TOUGHEN RELATIVE TO [illegible] (5,5)
9. [illegible] (8,8)
10. [illegible] "WAY-OUT" (4,4)
11. SWEET RESIDENTIAL HOUSES, FRENCH TO BE SURE, INITIALLY FEATURED IN "ASIAN HOLIDAY" ESSAY (4,4)
12. [illegible] (4,4)
13. GROUPS OF PLAYERS KEEP THE SAME COMPANY BACK-[illegible] (6,6)
15. [illegible] (8,8)
20. ONE IMPERIOUS ACTUATOR DECIPHERED UNFINISHED MARX BROTHER LINE GARBLED IN "THE GREAT GASBAG" (8,8)
21. FROM TEN P.M., SHY ORDERLY GIVING GIRLS RIGHT TO USE LEISURE TIME ENTERTAINING MALES (8,8)

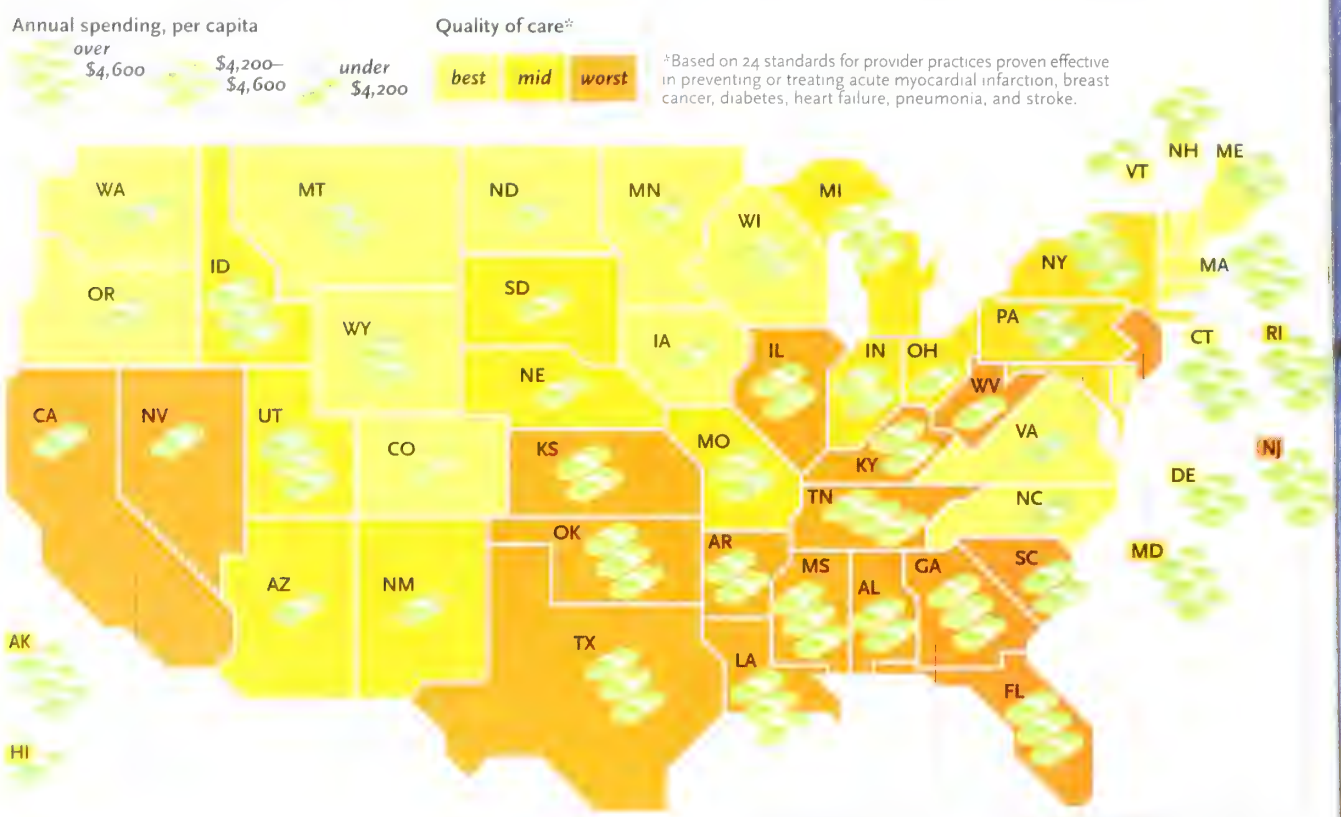
Down

1. "I'M IN THE SOUP" CHILD ACTOR ORSON, HOLDING [illegible] REALLY CALM DOWN!" (10,10, *one is two words*)
2. [illegible] TENT (5,5)
3. [illegible]
4. [illegible] (4,4)
5. [illegible] BLASTS (6,6)
6. [illegible]
7. [illegible] IN A GROUP" (10,10)
14. [illegible] ICON (5,5)
16. [illegible] (4,4)
17. [illegible]
18. [illegible] WRAPS OFF (4,4)
19. SOMETHING WIRY TELLOW ATTRACTS TO DIRECT (3,5)

Contest Rules: [illegible] 1981. It must be [illegible] phrase that appears in the [illegible] the first three contestants picked by random drawing to receive [illegible] the July issue. The winners of the March puzzle, "Three TV [illegible] City" and Holland Shepard, "Soaper Bowl of Drama."

MEDICARE: TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE

As America scrambles to find ways to cut the cost of health care, many reasonably fear that the quality of care will also dimini But recent state and regional studies of fee-for-service Medicare enrollees reveal no direct correlation between the value of c and what is spent on it. Alaska, Texas, Connecticut, and Louisiana, for example, spend the most but rank 23rd, 45th, 6th, a 49th, respectively, in quality; among the top twenty spenders, only three states are among the best caregivers. According the "Dartmouth Atlas of Health Care," differences in Medicare reimbursement rates cannot be explained by geographic va ations in wealth, population, age, sex, race, diagnosis, or local costs. But high spending often coincides with a reliance inpatient care and specialists—treatments used heavily in end-of-life care. In terms of quality, sparsely populated northern states gener ly do better than crowded ones; and no region fares worse than the Southeast, where a legacy of poverty and segregation has made for a r atively sickly population, much of it rural, with limited access to doctors. In such high-demand, high-risk areas, care is more often inte sive than preventive, and less is spent on ensuring overall quality. Even though this sort of triage is all too common in the richest coun in the world, the numbers also show that coordination of standardized practices can buy better care for fewer dollars, suggesting tha diagnosis may be in sight and that money wielded without sharp analysis can be a blunt and clumsy instrument indeed.

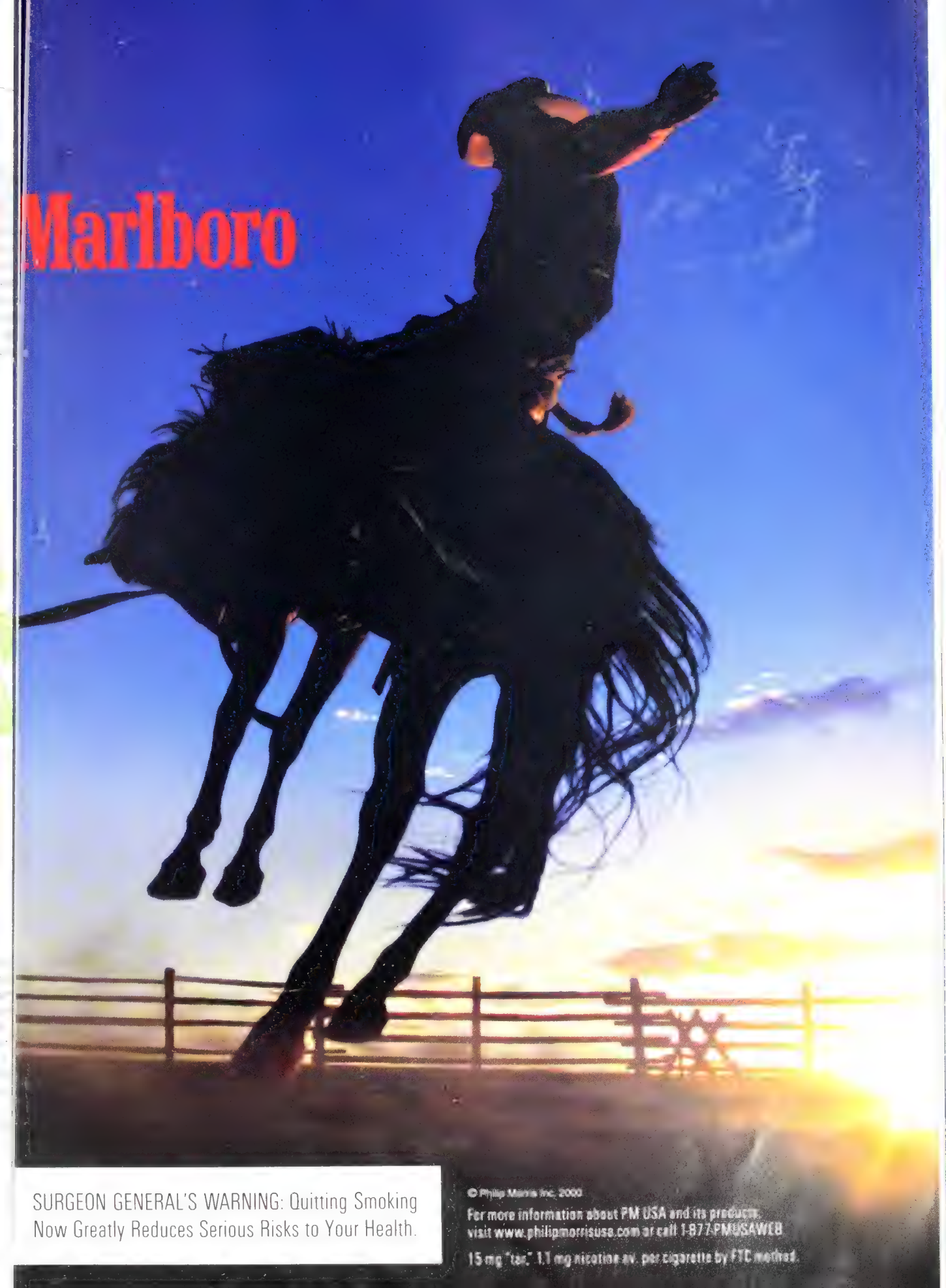


Although **California** differs little from Oregon in overall poverty, income disparity, and lack of insurance, it receives proportionally less national funding to monitor its sprawling health-care system, which includes more managed-care enrollees than most of its neighbors yet fewer community hospitals per capita. California's Medicare patients are enrolled in managed care at more than twice the national rate, creating a fee-for-service population that is generally more vulnerable and a system that devotes more scrutiny to controlling spending than to coordinating and monitoring quality. The state's size and demographic variety also add to the uneven quality and distribution of its care.

Like many of its neighbors, **Georgia** has high rates of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, cancer, and diabetes, particularly in its rural counties, where a majority of the state's hospitals, though fewer than one in five of its doctors, is located. These doctors tend to be overextended and must treat sicker patients at later stages of illness. As in Alabama and South Carolina, more than a third of the state's rural population lives in federally designated "persistently poor" counties. Such counties account for about a fifth of the rural population in other neighboring states.

New Jersey's lack of statewide coordination of standards and monitoring sets it apart from its neighbors in terms of quality. The problem is aggravated by the fact that a large proportion of the state's doctors work in small private practices, fewer focus on primary care, and almost half were trained abroad. Like many states, New Jersey has also been sluggish in adopting automated health-care records. Its hospitals are chronically underfunded but, unlike most states in the region, are required by statute to treat all patients, regardless of their ability to pay.

Jonathan Skinner and Dr. Elliott Fisher, Dartmouth Medical School, and Dr. Stephen F. Jencks, U.S. Health Care Financing Administration.



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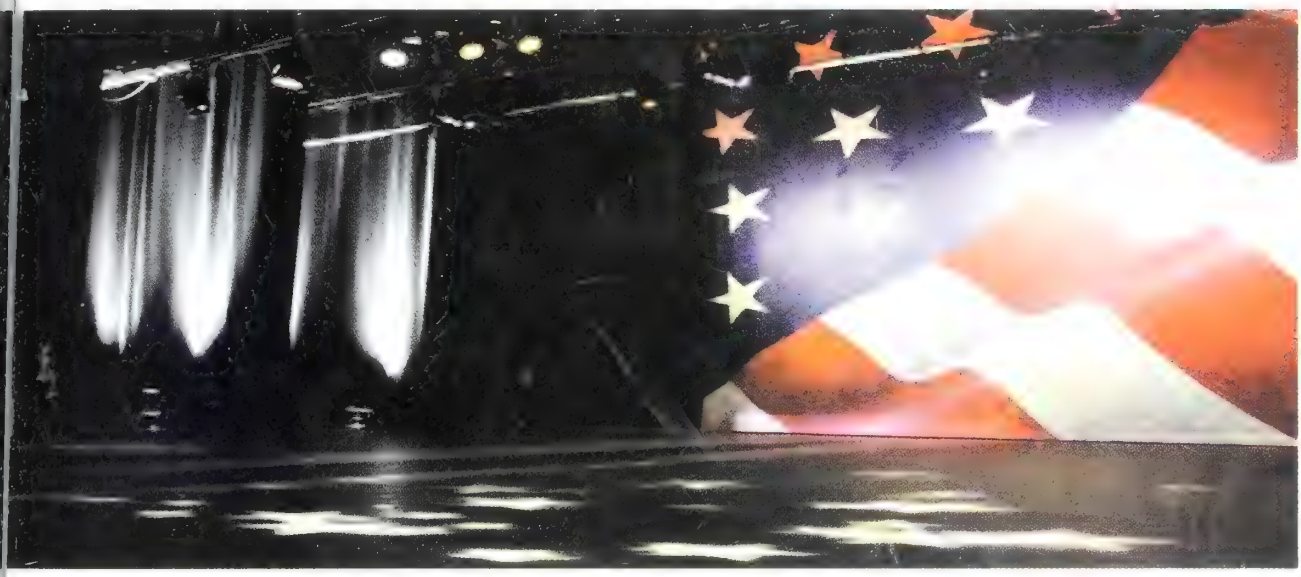
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On Politics and the Art of Acting
By Arthur Miller

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Seeking Appraisal at the *Antiques Roadshow*
By Joshua Wolf Shenk

BLUE EYES, BROWN EYES
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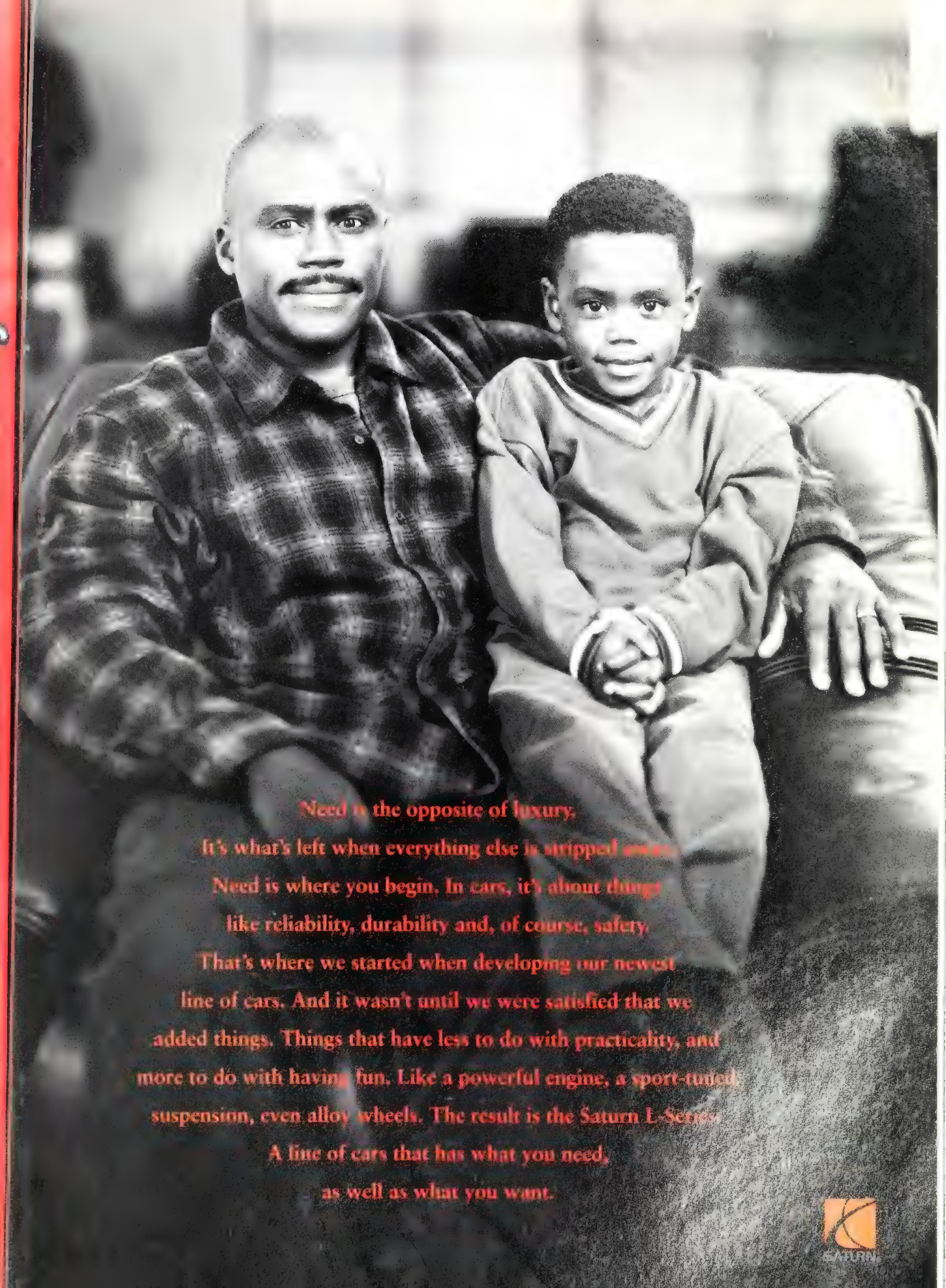
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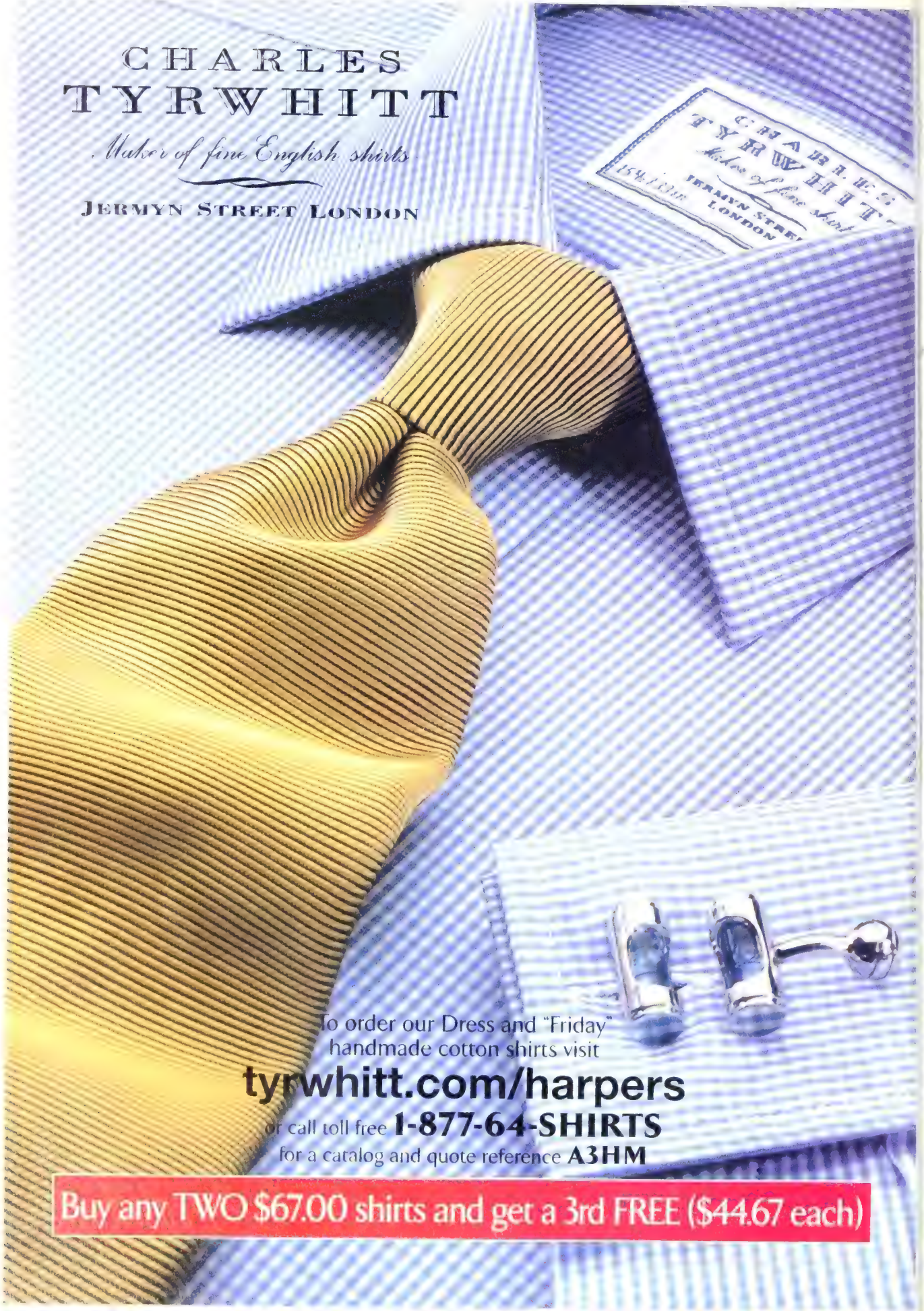
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LETTERS

Henry Fool

Christopher Hitchens is, of course, totally correct in arguing that Henry Kissinger is a war criminal ["The Case Against Henry Kissinger," February, March]. Kissinger was notably callous in seeking personal power and profit and, in the process, completely ignoring the loss of American lives, the loss for many peoples of the world, the loss to civilization.

The Vietnam War, in particular, was largely in violation of the rules of civilized war. I retired early from the Air Force in large part to make known my concerns with Kissinger's sick adventure there. There were others in the armed services who opposed the war: although it was poorly reported then, and is largely forgotten now, at least some B-52 crew members refused to bomb Hanoi and were court-martialed.

It would be impossible to punish all those who were truly guilty for their actions in Vietnam. But the trial of Henry Kissinger alone would send a stern warning to similarly minded folk in power that the carelessness with which civilians are bombed—whether by terrorist groups or by governments—is not acceptable.

It is my hope that steps will indeed be taken to charge Henry Kissinger with war crimes under international law. I will sign such charges.

John B. Coffey
Lt. Col., Retired
U.S. Air Force
Moore Haven, Fla.

In 1979, I spent ten days in Lima, Peru, jail, awaiting deportation for a visa violation. There I met a stuttering Chilean prisoner who ranted to me every day of how Henry Kissinger had plotted the assassination of his cousin General René Schneider. The prisoner claimed that he had infiltrated Patria y Libertad, the fascist group that had defied the 1970 election of Salvadore Allende to the presidency of Chile and had ties to the assassins of General Schneider, who opposed any meddling in the democratic process. When the prisoner was found out, the group had moved to kill him. The prisoner had then fled Chile and had been hiding in Lima from 1971 until he was caught without a visa.

I thought that this man was a paranoid schizophrenic, or that he was rehearsing a fantasy in order to avoid deportation. But now, having read of Kissinger's involvement in Schneider's murder, the coup in Chile, and other immoral plots throughout the world, I know that this powerless, hysterical prisoner must have been one of the millions whose lives were destroyed by Kissinger and Company.

Monty Fisher
Los Angeles

What satisfaction for hippie-boomers to see the whole case

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nst Henry Kissinger put down in
nt: two issues, one cover story
n.

here's no news in it, though.
secrets have been obvious all
se years. And the satisfaction is
low knowing that Hitchens's
t will lead to nothing more than
mentary embarrassment, if even
t, for Kissinger. The embarrass-
nt will no doubt be quickly salved
a surfeit of big-money deals; his
nce card will remain filled by the
nest names.

Kissinger is, and will remain, the
ling of the privileged class. He
ll die rich, and respected (by those
who matter). Chances will never be
ought to bear, and his villainy will
ve no consequences for him.
hat will it matter to him and his
that several million of us know of
s napalmed inner landscape?

Richard Vidasek
Park City, Hawaii

A note of hope: on February 19, 2001, a report published by the on-line newspaper *La Tercera* states that Chilean lawyers are planning to sue Kissinger for his interference with and subversive actions against Chilean democracy.

Eve Crowley-Cuneo
Cleveland

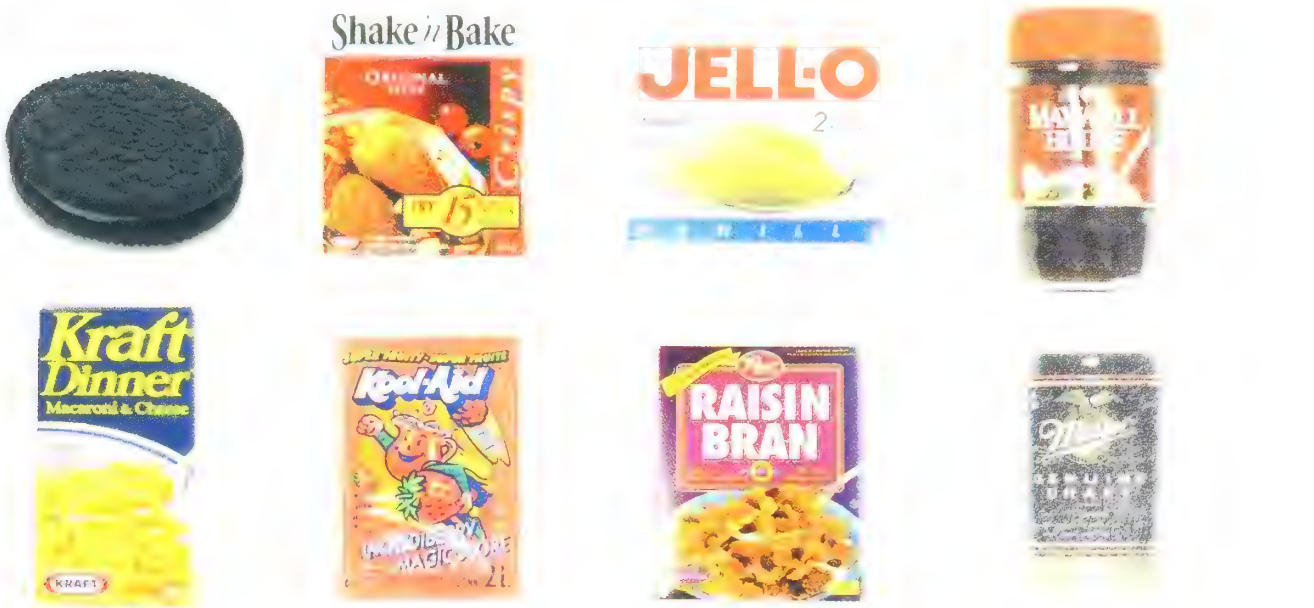
Hitting Bellow the Belt

Lee Siegel is the sort of literary critic who so eviscerates his subjects that there is nothing left for the buzzards to feed on. That is surely the case with his recent dismantlement of James Atlas ["Seize the Day Jobs," March]. But even those who agree that there is some rough justice in giving Atlas the same sour treatment his biography heaped on Saul Bellow may find themselves wondering when enough of this mean-spiritedness is enough. After all, if there is plenty to worry about in Atlas's biography, there is also plenty to applaud. Bellow's readers now know much more about his working methods—and the work that resulted—than they did before.

What Siegel's readers learn, how-

We owe a profound debt of gratitude to James Atlas for writing the

>> Continued on page 88



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NOTEBOOK

Model citizens

By Lewis H. Lapham

When a prince's personal conduct is correct, his government is effective without the issuing of orders. If his personal conduct is not correct, he may issue orders, but they will not be followed.

Confucius

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani seldom misses a chance to cleanse New York of its moral and spiritual impurities, and so it came as no surprise earlier this spring when he appointed a board of examiners to vouch for the appropriateness of the art objects carried into museums dependent on the grace and favor of the city budget. The naming of a Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission to uphold "standards of decency" followed from the mayor's disapproval of an exhibition mounted in February by the Brooklyn Museum of Art that included a photograph—fifteen feet long and three feet high—of a nude black woman (the photographer herself) posed as the figure of Christ at the Last Supper. Without taking the trouble to go to Brooklyn, the mayor pronounced the photograph "outrageous" and "disgusting," and to the newspaper reporters assembled at City Hall he declared his intention "to look at what penalties are available for this." When it was pointed out that he had failed in a previous attempt to punish the same museum for its display in 1999 of a painting of the Virgin Mary augmented with elephant dung, the mayor said that his lawyers would be investigating "a way to get this dispute to the place where I think we could win it, which would be the Supreme Court of the United States."

Not [illegible] arrived from Washington by April 3, the mayor again summoned the press to City Hall to introduce the twenty citizens, fifteen men and five women unblemished by postmodern aesthetic theory, to whom he had entrusted a task that he was careful not to define. Presumably the commissioners were to act in the capacity of customs officials, protecting the frontiers of established taste against the traffic in subversive images, but they were as reluctant as the mayor to discuss the regulations under which they would grant or deny an import license. They contented themselves with looking upright and respectable, decency their watchword, civility their lifelong avocation, among them a rabbi, an imam, the mayor's divorce lawyer, and a portrait painter known for his flattering likenesses of corporate chief executives.

The news media's response to Giuliani's proclamation fluctuated between mockery and alarm. The wits rejoiced in the absurdist humor of high-toned moral statements handed down by a mayor who liked to dress up in women's clothes and who accommodated both his current and former mistress with allowances from the city treasury, and whose wife, estranged but still resident in Gracie Mansion, showed up last fall in an off-Broadway theater performing a star turn in *The Vagina Monologues*. The more solemn critics mentioned Nazi Germany and worried about "the chilling effect" apt to dampen a museum director's enthusiasm for one of Benozzo Gozzoli's pictures of a mutilated saint.

For my own part I wondered why Giuliani continues to harass museums. Together with every other resident of New York, I know the mayor to be a very watchful man, suspicious of people speaking out of turn or without a Parks Department permit quick to issue writs of prohibition against strip-club dancers, street vendors, minstrels, squeegee men, jaywalkers, and stray dogs. But why museums? Where was the imminent threat and what the present danger? No artist has menaced American society for forty years. Neither has an author, sculptor, or composer of string quartets. The contemporary audience prefers to take its cue from Benjamin Franklin in eighteenth-century Philadelphia, who observed that in the new republic "one schoolmaster is worth a dozen poets," and the invention of a machine or the improvement of an implement is of more importance than a masterpiece of Raphael," and the celebrity crowd before which Mayor Giuliani sometimes appears in fishnet stockings and high-heel shoes prefers objects that move and do things to those that merely wait to be understood, more interested in what Van Gogh's crazed hand did to his ear than in what his incomparable eyes saw in the sunlight at Arles.

Most of the citizens likely to wander into the Brooklyn Museum on rainy weekend afternoons bring with them a sensibility trained by the entertainment media to appreciate the manufacture of art as a frivolous or domestic pursuit—an occupation comparable to weaving baskets or making jam. Safely classified as luxuries or toys and comprising any and all activities believed to be "creative," the line of goods known a

arts" serves as a palliative to
l to slums, children's hospitals,
Native American reservations;
cure for boredom or drug addic-
n; as gifts of political patronage.
is any hobby, craft, or harmless
isement that keeps people off the
ets. So easy is the democratic ap-
ach to Parnassus that more than
illion Americans last year listed
ir occupation as "artist." Under
circumstances and not surpris-
ly, Mayor Giuliani construes
stic expression as a form of per-
nal behavior and doesn't find
th difference between the painter
l the squeegee man, the ugly blot
him the gilded frame as much an
ult and an effrontery as the un-
wanted soap on the wind-
shield of the Lexus.

Similarly in Washington this
ring, the Republican majorities in
ommand of Congress drew a distinc-
n as careful as Mayor Giuliani's be-
ween the rights reserved to property
d those grudgingly distributed to
ople. The legislation introduced or
ssed during the first 100 days of the
sh Administration (the tax bill; the
ons granted to the banks; the ease-
nts awarded to the oil, mining, and
surance companies; etc.) reserves
e freedom of expression to corpora-
ons and imposes on the citizenry the
rdens of restraint. The Federal Com-
unications Commission on April 6
rmed its right to judge the decency
indecency of radio and television
oadcasts, the ruling to be made in the
terest of shielding children from de-
tion or description of "sexual or ex-
etory organs or activities" in a
atently offensive" manner; ten days
ter the FCC indicated that it would
move the restraints that for the last
enty-six years had prevented tele-
sion networks from combining with
e another in the baroque art forms
sublime monopoly.

The lesson posted on the bulletin
oards in Washington were as plain
Mayor Giuliani's order forbidding
ssembly of more than fifty persons
n the steps of City Hall. Property is
autiful and must be sheltered from
e rain; mere human beings, by na-
re unstable and rebellious, must be
laced under strict surveillance and

The new New Left Review

If the 1980s were the decade of the Right in the West, the 1990s saw a comparable sweep by the Centre-Left. In the latest New Left Review Perry Anderson asks whether the Democrats' loss of the US Presidency really presages another turn of the wheel in Atlantic politics.



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we can expect to see the na-
i al parks named for the manufac-
rers of heavy automobiles and
i t beer.

As with the country's sports arenas
public parks, the public discourse
e thought to be synonymous with
l workings of democracy now pre-
gs itself in forums draped with cor-
ate trademarks. The citizen who
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st first adjust his text to the pri-
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r dissenting opinion on a website
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the Internet.

The critics who decry Mayor Giu-
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useum take the wrong lesson from
e tale. Let them learn not from his
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epudiate their debts and live hand-
omely beyond their means—and we
ll might enter into the dream of
heaven favored by the nation's lead-
ng politicians and sold in the na-
ion's better stores. ■

JORGE LUIS BORGES
THIS CRAFT OF VERSE

EDITED BY CALIN ANDREI MIHAILESCU



"Jorge Luis Borges is inarguably the most influential Latin-American essayist and short-story writer of our time. To spend a few hours in [his] company, even on the page, is a civilized entertainment not to be missed."
—Michael Dirda, *Washington Post Book Wor*

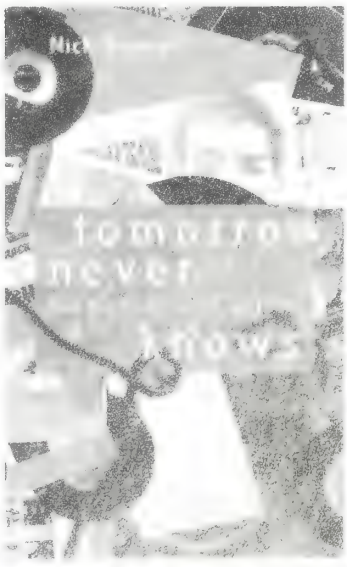
"If few writers in history have been as prodigiously learned as Borges, certainly none wore their learning so lightly or humbly... [The lectures] display the eloquence and erudite, offhand wit familiar from his writings as well as a charming, plainspoken modesty."
New Yorker

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Nick Bromell

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HARPER'S INDEX

Average number of minutes devoted to President Bush on network evening news broadcasts during his first 100 days in office : [illegible]

Average number of minutes devoted to President Clinton's [illegible] during his first 100 days in office : [illegible]

Years after the McCain-Feingold campaign-finance reform bill was introduced before it passed : [illegible]

Total amount raised at the two major-party fund-raisers held in the week before its passage : $9,500,000

Number of members of Congress or their staffers who failed to take advantage of [illegible] in 1999 : 60

Amount Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill earned in salary in 2000 : $0

Rank of Alcoa among the worst U.S. polluters during O'Neill's tenure, according to the Political Economy Research Institute : 1

Minimum number of accidental releases of chemicals or oil leading to deaths or injuries at U.S. work sites last year : 230

Percentage change since 1995 in carbon emissions by the United States and Japan, respectively : [illegible], 1.5

Ratio of the amount of insecticides used in the U.S. in 1945 to the amount used last year : 1:10

Estimated percentage of U.S. pre-harvest crops lost to insects in 1945 and last year, respectively : 7, 13

Average number of food-poisoning incidents in the United States each day : [illegible]

Percentage increase since last summer in European meat orders to U.S. meatpacking plants : [illegible]

Estimated number of people who tried to cross illegally into Ireland from the United Kingdom last year : 12

Estimated number of Bosnians who have been identified from the 4,000 bags of remains from the 1995 Srebrenica massacre : 80

Amount that the U.S. has given El Salvador for earthquake relief since January : $14,500,000

Estimated amount that Salvadorans living in the U.S. sent home last year : $1,800,000,000

Number of medical scholarships that Cuba announced it would offer U.S. students in 2001 : [illegible]

Annual amount spent since 1995 to maintain the Office of National Drug Control Policy's media campaign : [illegible]

Holes of golf that Japan's prime minister played after learning of February's fatal collision of a fishing boat and a U.S. sub : 3

Average duration of a Japanese prime minister's tenure since August 1993 : 10 months

Estimated number of blank ballots cast in protest during Israel's national election in February : [illegible]

Days before the election that the Israeli supreme court rejected a request that blank ballots be counted : 4

Amount Iraq pledged last December to support the Palestinian Intifada : $930,000,000

Amount Iraq pledged in January to aid "poor Americans" : $93,000,000

Estimated number of Americans who received letters from Iraq's Red Crescent society : [illegible]

Average number of pounds gained by an international student during his or her first ten weeks in the U.S. : 2

Ratio of the weight of a [illegible] at an Audubon Center at the [illegible] to the weight of a Bangkok bobby : [illegible]

Ratio of per capita Ritalin use in Vermont to per capita use in California : 3:1

Concentration of over-the-counter painkillers, in parts per billion, detected in Missouri's Blue River last February : 0.98

Percentage of the electrical supply of the U.S. and Canada, respectively, that is produced by dams : 10, 62

Percentage of the United States' 77,000 dams that are equipped with [illegible] : [illegible]

Performance of the Panama Canal Authority last year, on a scale of one to ten, according to its advisory board's chair : 12

Performance of Ricky Martin in bed, on a scale of one to ten, according to his new girlfriend : 20

Age range in which a heterosexual U.S. man is most likely to acknowledge having once had a homosexual experience : 50+

Age range in which a heterosexual U.S. woman is most likely to acknowledge this : 18–29

Percentage change since 1989 in the annual number of [illegible] : [illegible]

Number of U.S. states whose laws still refer to children born out of wedlock as "bastards" : 15

Number of PBS stations that are [illegible] called "Mean and [illegible]" : [illegible]

Chance that a Catholic saint named in the last 400 years was canonized by Pope John Paul II : 1 in 7

[illegible]

[illegible]

AN AMERICAN ALBUM

HARPER'S MAGAZINE

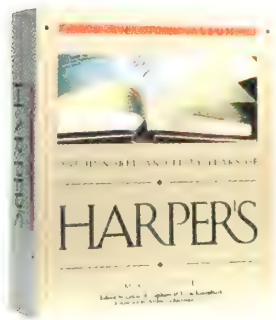
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READINGS

[Testimonial]

TOMORROW'S BIRD

By Ian Frazier, from the Fall 2000 issue of Double-Take. *Frazier's most recent book is* On the Rez.

Since January, I've been working for the crows, and so far it's the best job I ever had. I kind of fell into it by a combination of preparedness and luck. I'd been casting around a bit, looking for a new direction in my career, and one afternoon when I was out on my walk I happened to see some crows fly by. One of them landed on a telephone wire just above my head. I looked at him for a moment, and then on impulse I made a *skchhh* noise with my teeth and lips. He seemed to like that; I saw his tail make a quick upward bobbing motion at the sound. Encouraged, I made the noise again, and again his tail bobbed. He looked at me closely with one eye, then turned his beak and looked at me with the other, meanwhile readjusting his feet on the wire. After a few minutes, he cawed and flew off to join his companions. I had a good feeling I couldn't put into words. Basically, I thought the meeting had gone well, and as it turned out I was right. When I got home there was a message from the crows saying I had the job.

That first interview proved indicative of the crows' business style. They are very informal and relaxed, unlike their public persona, and mostly they leave me alone. I'm given a general direction of what they want done, but the specifics of how to do it are up to me. For example, the crows have long been unhappy about public misperceptions of them: that they raid other birds' nests, drive songbirds away, eat garbage and dead things, can't sing, etc.—all of which are completely untrue once you know them. My first task was to take these misperceptions and turn them into a more positive image. I decided the crows needed a slogan that emphasized their strengths as a species. The slogan I came up with was "Crows: We Want to Be Your Only Bird™." I told this to the crows, they loved it, and we've been using it ever since.

Crows speak a dialect of English rather like that of the remote hill people of the Alleghenies. If you're not accustomed to it, it can be hard to understand. In their formal speech they are as measured and clear as a radio announcer from the Midwest—though, as I say, they are seldom formal with me. (For everyday needs, of course, they caw.) Their unit of money is the empty soda bottle, which trades at a rate of about twenty to the dollar. In the recent years of economic boom, the crows have quietly amassed great power. With investment capital based on their nationwide control of everything that gets run over on the roads, they have bought a number of major companies. Pepsi-Cola is now owned by the crows, as well as [illegible] Newspapers and the company that makes Tombstone Frozen Pizzas. The [illegible] Metropolitan Opera is now wholly [illegible]

In order to stay competitive, as most people know, the crows recently merged with the ravens. This was done not only for reasons of growth but also to better serve those millions

DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS

One hundred thirty-five species of birds are known to use the area, including numerous shorebirds, waterfowl, loons, songbirds, and

notable example

the snow goose. Large numbers of snow geese, varying each year from 15,000 to more than 300,000 birds, feed on the Arctic Refuge coastal tundra for three to four weeks each fall. They feed on cottongrass and other plants to build up fat reserves in preparation for their journey south, eating as much as a third of their body weight every day. The rich vegetation of the coastal tundra enables them to increase fat reserves by 400 percent in only two to three weeks.

Snow geese feed on small patches of vegetation that are widely distributed across the Refuge's coastal tundra, so a large area is necessary to meet their needs. They are extremely sensitive to disturbance, often flying away from their feeding sites when human activities occur

who live and work near crows. In the future, both crows and ravens will be known by the group name of Crows, so if you see a bird and wonder which it is, you don't have to waste any time: officially and legally, it's a crow. The net result of this, of course, is that now there are a lot more crows—which is exactly what the crows want. Studies they've sponsored show that there could be anywhere from ten to a thousand times more crows than there already are, with no strain on carrying capacity. A healthy increase in crow numbers would make basic services like cawing loudly outside your bedroom window at six in the morning available to all. In this area, as in many others, the crows are thinking very long-term.

If more people in the future get a chance to know crows as I have done, they are in for a real treat. Because I must say, the crows have been absolutely wonderful to me. I like them not just as highly profitable business associates but as friends. Their aggressive side, admittedly quite strong in disputes with scarlet tanagers, etc., has been nowhere in evidence around me. I could not wish for any companions more charming. The other day I was having lunch with an important crow in the park, me sipping from a drinking fountain while he ate peanuts taken from a squirrel. In between sharp downward raps of his bill on the peanut shell to poke it open, he drew me out with seemingly artless questions. Sometimes the wind would push the shell to one side, and he would steady it with one large foot while continuing the raps with his beak. And all the while, he kept up his attentive questioning, making me feel that, business considerations aside, he was truly interest-

"Crows: We Want to Be Your Only Bird™." I think this slogan is worth repeating, because there's a lot behind it. Of course, the crows don't literally want (or expect) to be the only species of bird left on the planet. They admire and enjoy other kinds of birds and even hope that there will still be some remaining in limited numbers out of doors as well as in zoos and museums. But in terms of daily usage, the crows hope that you will think of them first when you're looking for those quality-of-life intangibles usually associated with birds. Singing, for example: crows actually can sing, and beautifully, too; so far, however, they have not been given the chance. In the future, with fewer other birds around, they feel that they will be.

Whether they're good-naturedly harassing an owl caught out in daylight, or carrying bits of sticks and used gauze bandage in their beaks to make their colorful free-form nests, or simply landing on the sidewalk in front of you



nervously in attics, sneaking through pet doors, and gnawing little holes in things are all in the crows' expansion plans.

I would not have taken this job if I did not believe, strongly and deeply, in the crows myself. And I do. I could go on and on about the crows' generosity, taste in music, sense of family values; the "buddy system" they invented to use against other birds, the work they do for the Shriners, and more. But they're paying me a lot of bottles to say this—I can't expect everybody to believe me. I do ask, if you're unconvinced, that you take this simple test: Next time you're looking out a window or driving in a car, notice if there's a crow in sight. Then multiply that one crow by lots and lots of crows, and you'll get an idea of what the next few years will bring. In the bird department, no matter what, the future is going to be almost all crows, almost all the time. That's just a fact.

So why not just accept it, and learn to appre- [illegible] crows are going to influence our culture and our world in beneficial ways we can't even imagine today. Much of what they envision I am not yet at liberty to disclose, but I can tell you that it is magnificent. They are going to be birds like we've never seen. In their dark, jewel-like eyes burns an ambition to be more and better and to fly around all over the place constantly. They're smart, they're driven, and they're comin' at us. The crows: let's get ready to welcome tomorrow's only bird.

[Clarification]

AS THE WORLD BURNS

From a March 28 press briefing by U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher. Earlier that day, President Bush announced his opposition to [illegible] *United States and eighty-three other signatory nations to cut carbon-dioxide emissions and curb global warming. The protocol is awaiting ratification.*

Q: Is the State Department moving to take the U.S. signature off the Kyoto agreement, or [illegible]

RICHARD BOUCHER: There is, I think, a certain amount of confusion in the air. Let me try to clarify for you. The President, the administration, clearly opposed the protocol, because we believe it exempts developing countries, and we think it might seriously harm the U.S. economy. At the same time, we are looking at the issue of climate change and how we deal with it. We are not looking at a question of un-signing Kyoto.

Q: You say that you are not trying to un-sign it, but is the administration prepared to implement it?

BOUCHER: I think the President's statement made quite clear our view on that, and let me see if I have the quote right here. Probably not, but let me just check. No, it was probably on page one. The simple answer is no.

You're not.

BOUCHER: We're not looking for ratification. What we are looking for is to deal with the issue of climate change. I think it probably requires a certain level of understanding beyond mine, but at this point I don't think there is a document to be ratified, that the process of implementation is ongoing. I probably already messed things up.

The process of discussion on how to do this, of how to go forward on the issue of climate change, is ongoing. We will continue to work with other governments once we have reviewed the situation and looked for approaches to climate change that we feel can effectively deal with the problem.

Q: So would you concede that there is a bit of a technical difference between un-signing it and just not implementing it?

BOUCHER: No.

Q: Is there a difference, technically speaking?

BOUCHER: Yes.

There is?

BOUCHER: Yes.

Which is what?

BOUCHER: Which is a difference. They are not the same thing. I don't know how to explain.

Q: But is the result different, the end result?

BOUCHER: The end result . . . I don't . . . You're getting caught up on a technicality, if it is even a technicality. There is a difference between "un-signing," as it's come to be used, and not ratifying, not implementing, whatever. But the point is, what we are doing now is looking for ways to work with our allies, with our friends, to address the issue of global climate change. One shouldn't get caught up in exact status or signatures or documents, frankly.

Q: Then what's the use of the document?

Then why ever sign [illegible]

BOUCHER: This question exists in international law. It is a very precise question in international law. It has a very precise legal interpretation to it, and that's why there is a difference between that and what we are doing.

[Entanglements]

THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME

From the transcript of an Xpress 3 meeting attended by Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura, Minneapolis St. Paul Star Tribune *Outdoors columnist Dennis Anderson, and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) commissioner Allen Garber, among others. Soon after the interview appeared on the* Star Tribune *website, Ventura apologized to irate hunters on his weekly radio show.*

JESSE VENTURA: Instead of you interviewing me, I'm going to interview you.

DENNIS ANDERSON: You're going to interview me?

VENTURA: Yeah. I took great offense to your article on Sunday, very big offense, insinuating that Commissioner Garber and I somehow aren't reputable people and that we can't be trusted with DNR money. And also the implication that somehow I don't know about wildlife, hunting, and fishing. On what do you base your opinions and your knowledge of me on?

ANDERSON: I didn't say you didn't know anything about hunting.

VENTURA: You insinuate it all the time. I read it in your articles all the time. Well, first of all, let me tell you something. My family and I have owned a lake cabin for forty-four years in the state of Minnesota. That's a lot more than Bud Grant [the former coach of the Minnesota Vikings]. To my knowledge, he's in Wisconsin.

ANDERSON: How'd he get into this?

VENTURA: I just threw him out there for practical purposes. 'Cause he testified against me once and said I didn't know anything about hunting or fishing. All right, I've owned a lake cabin for forty-four years. My parents, and now I, own it; they're gone. Second of all, when it comes to hunting—I got your résumé. You ever done military service?

ANDERSON: You have my résumé?

VENTURA: Yeah, I got your file. You ever done military service?

ANDERSON: No.

VENTURA: You haven't? Well, Commissioner Garber and I have. He has two tours to Vietnam and I have one as a Navy SEAL and then seventeen months in Southeast Asia, and I'll just tell you this: Until you hunted man, you haven't hunted yet. Because you need to hunt something that can shoot back at you to really classify yourself as a hunter. You need to understand the feeling of what it's like to go out to the field and know that your opposition can

[Dreamers]

HAIR RAGE

From "Did Samson Have Antisocial Personality Disorder?" by Doctors Eric Lewin Altschuler, Ansar Haroun, Bing Ho, and Amy Weimer, of the University of California at San Diego School of Medicine. The findings were published in the February issue of the Archives of General Psychiatry.

The study of the history of a disease can provide clues to its pathogenesis. We note a possible case of antisocial personality disorder (ASPD) nearly three thousand years ago in the biblical figure Samson (Judges, Chapters 13–16), son of Manoah. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* requires that three of seven criteria be met for the diagnosis of ASPD. Samson meets six:

(1) Failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behavior: The Philistines tried to arrest Samson after he burned the Philistine fields (15:5) and went to Gaza (16:1).

(2) Deceitfulness, as indicated by repeated lying: Samson did not tell his parents that he had killed a lion. Furthermore, he proffered honey for his parents to eat but did not tell them it had come from the carcass of a lion (14:9), and thus caused them to violate their dietary laws.

(3) Impulsivity: He burned the Philistine fields (15:5).

(4) Irritability and aggressiveness: Samson was repeatedly involved in physical fights.

(5) Reckless disregard for safety of self or others: Samson is reported to have taken on and killed one thousand Philistines single-handedly (15:15). He also told Delilah the secret to his strength (16:17), even after she had attempted three times previously to get this secret.

(6) Lack of remorse: He gloated (15:16) after killing one thousand men.

In addition, Samson committed many of the actions listed in the criteria for conduct disorder—fire setting, cruelty to small animals (15:5), bullying, initiating physical fights, and using a weapon (jawbone of ass, 15:15). Samson's conduct was considered unacceptable in his time: three thousand Israelites (Samson's own people!) captured him and delivered him to the Philistines (15:12).

Recognition of the diagnosis of antisocial personality disorder for Samson may help us not only to understand the biblical story better but also to recognize instances when a contemporary leader suffers from ASPD.

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Dennis and Allen Twin Mirror Images, 1993 — *by Roger Ballen, from his new book* Outland, *published by Phaidon Press*
Limited in England and in the United States. Courtesy South African artist, 1982.

public for twenty-six years as an FBI agent. He did two tours of Vietnam. Again, that's hunting. Going out and shooting Bambi, to me, isn't hunting. Because you walk out there, and you're going to shoot some poor little animal that can't shoot back, that offers no defense. And that's being a sportsman and a hunter?

ANDERSON *[Gesturing at Allen Garber]*: He doesn't hunt. That's the deal. He doesn't hunt.

ALLEN GARBER: I went deer hunting this year by the way, Dennis. I went pheasant hunting last year. You don't know everything.

[illegible] That's right. And you don't consider war hunting?

ANDERSON: Not in the context that we're discussing.

VENTURA: Really. I do.

ANDERSON: Well, you do. I don't.

VENTURA: Well, that's because you have no experience at it.

ANDERSON: Have you hunted deer?

VENTURA: No.

ANDERSON: That's my point then, I guess.

VENTURA: My point is, the deer can't shoot back. Have you hunted man?

ANDERSON: No.

VENTURA: Then you have no basis to talk from, pal. Because hunting a deer, big deal. Big deal.

ANDERSON: I'm not saying it is a big deal.

VENTURA: So don't tell me I'm not a hunter. The training is to hunt, to hunt something and be successful. I find that it's far more challenging to hunt something that can potentially do harm back to you than to go out and hunt something that sits around and eats twigs and leaves in the middle of the woods, and then you've got the gall to tell me I'm not a hunter? You better talk to Commander Marsinko about that too, what the definition of being a hunter is.

ANDERSON: As I was saying, my issue is conservation. It's not being effected in this state, and needs to be if we want to continue our heritage.

VENTURA: And let me say from a personal note, all the friends that I grew up with are all avid hunters and fishermen. And they do it with their own money. I mean, they're not paid by a newspaper to go out and hire a guide for them and go out and write a story.

ANDERSON: Don't insult me.

VENTURA: You insult me all the time.

ANDERSON: I don't need a guide to take me out to hunt and fish. I'm not a newspaper guy—

VENTURA: You're not?

ANDERSON: —who needs help to go out and hunt and fish.

VENTURA: The only thing I see here on your résumé is you've been a newspaper guy your whole life.

ANDERSON: I was a truck driver for thirty years, coast to coast, Canada to Mexico.

VENTURA: Okay, well, that's not in there. So I guess you don't brag about that. Just please don't insinuate to me that I don't care. And I don't understand the state's woods, waters, and fields. I've only had a lake cabin for forty-four years, but I don't understand it. All my friends are hunters and fishermen. You know who I consult when I want to know about it? Not you. Them.

ANDERSON: Do you understand the status of the state's watersheds? They're in dismal shape. Do you understand uplands? Wetlands? It's not your fault. I'm just saying . . .

VENTURA: Do I understand it? Yeah. I watch what goes on. And please don't insinuate that I don't care. I do care. And don't ever think I'm not a hunter just because my job now doesn't allow me to do it every weekend. And just because I choose, having man, that there's no thrill for me to go out and shoot Bambi. You have to understand that many people, like Mr. Garber and I, when you go through and you're trained in combat, and you hunt the ultimate foe, well, it becomes very difficult, and I can't speak for Al, but for me, I can't draw down on Bambi. I can't shoot him.

ANDERSON: I don't care whether you hunt or not.

VENTURA: You miss my point. That still doesn't mean I'm not a hunter. And it's wrong for you to insinuate that I don't know how to hunt. Because when you hunt the ultimate foe, which is man, who can shoot back, you're the best hunter on the planet.

ANDERSON: I don't care whether someone hunts. I care about conservation.

VENTURA: Let me put it to you this way, Dennis. You've alienated me so bad, I rarely read you.

ANDERSON: Do you read the Sports section?

VENTURA: Yes.

ANDERSON: Well, more people read Outdoors than Sports Sunday, so you're in the minority.

VENTURA: That's true. But why am I not reading you? Because you're negative to me every time I pick up the paper. You sit and portray to the public I don't know a damn thing about the outdoors: I don't know how to hunt; I don't know how to fish; I don't know nothing. You know. So after a while, I quit reading it. Because you can't read stuff like that and maintain your sanity at this job.

[How to]

KILLING IS EASY!

From Military Studies in the Jihad Against the Tyrants, *a manual of Islamic revolt entered as evidence in the Manhattan trial of four men accused of plotting the 1998 bombings of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The text was found in Britain in the home of a follower of Osama bin Laden.*

[illegible]

We will limit the discussion to poisons that the holy warrior can prepare and use without endangering his health.

Castor beans. The substance ricin, an ex-

tract of castor beans, is considered one of the most deadly poisons: 0.035 milligram inhaled or injected intravenously is enough to kill someone. It is a simple operation to extract ricin, and castor beans can be obtained from nurseries throughout the country.

Precatory beans. The herbal poison abrin, extracted from precatory beans, is very similar to ricin. The seeds of this plant are red and black and are used in prayer beads.

Water hemlock. A lethal dose is 3.2 grams. It has a palatable taste and is very similar to parsnip.

Tobacco. There is enough nicotine in three cigarettes to kill a man. If eaten, sixty to seventy milligrams of pure nicotine will kill a person within an hour.

Potato sprout. Both rotten and green, contains solanine.

Dimethyl sulfoxide can be found with horse breeders or veterinarians. Mix poison with this substance, and when the enemy touches it he will die slowly within fifteen minutes to an hour.

Poisoning from eating spoiled food. Since 0.000028 gram will kill a person, this poison is absolutely lethal.

How to prepare spoiled food. Fill a pot with corn and green beans. Put in a small piece of meat and about two spoonfuls of fresh excrement. Pour the water into the pot until there is surface tension at the lip of the pot. Cover the pot tightly. If you do that correctly, there will be no air trapped in the pot. Leave the pot in a dark, moderately warm room for fifteen days. At the end of that period, you will notice a substance on the edge of the pot and a small amount of rottenness. You can make three or four pots at the same time. During the time of the destroyer, Jamal Abdul Nasser, someone who was being severely tortured in prison ate some feces after losing sanity because of the torture. A few hours later he was found dead.

Religious scholars have permitted beating. They use a tradition explained in Imam Mosallem's manuscript: that Allah's prophet—Allah bless and keep him—sought counsel when he was informed about Abou Soufian's arrival. Abou Bakr and Omar spoke, yet he (the Prophet) did not listen. Saad Ibn Ibada said, "Do you want us, O Allah's prophet, who controls my life? If you order us to subdue the camels we would do it, or beat and follow them to Al-Ghimad lakes (a five-day trip beyond Mecca), we would do it too." The Prophet—Allah bless and keep him—called on the people, who then descended on Badr. They were met by Kureish camels carrying water. Among their caretakers was a young black slave man belonging to the Al-Hajjaj clan. They took him hostage. The companions of the Prophet—Allah bless and keep him—started asking him about Abou Soufian and his companions. He first said, "I know nothing about Abou Soufian, but I know about Abou Jahl, Atba, Sheiba, and Omaya Ibn Khalaf." But when they beat him he said, "Oh yes, I will tell you. This is the news of Abou Soufian . . ."

Meanwhile, the Prophet—Allah bless and keep him—who was praying, started to depart, saying, "Strike him if he tells you the truth and release him if he lies." Then he said, "That is the death of him." He said that in the presence of his companions and while moving his hand on the ground.

In this tradition, we find permission to interrogate the hostage for the purpose of obtaining information. It is permitted to strike the nonbeliever who has no covenant until he reveals the news, information, and secrets of his people.

The religious scholars have also permitted the killing of a hostage if he insists on withholding information from Muslims. They permitted his killing so that he would not inform his people of what he learned about the Muslim condition, number, and secrets. In the Honein attack, after one of the spies learned about the Muslims' kindness and weakness, then fled, the Prophet—Allah bless and keep him—permitted his blood and said, "Find and kill him." Salma Ibn Al-Akwaa followed, caught, and killed him.

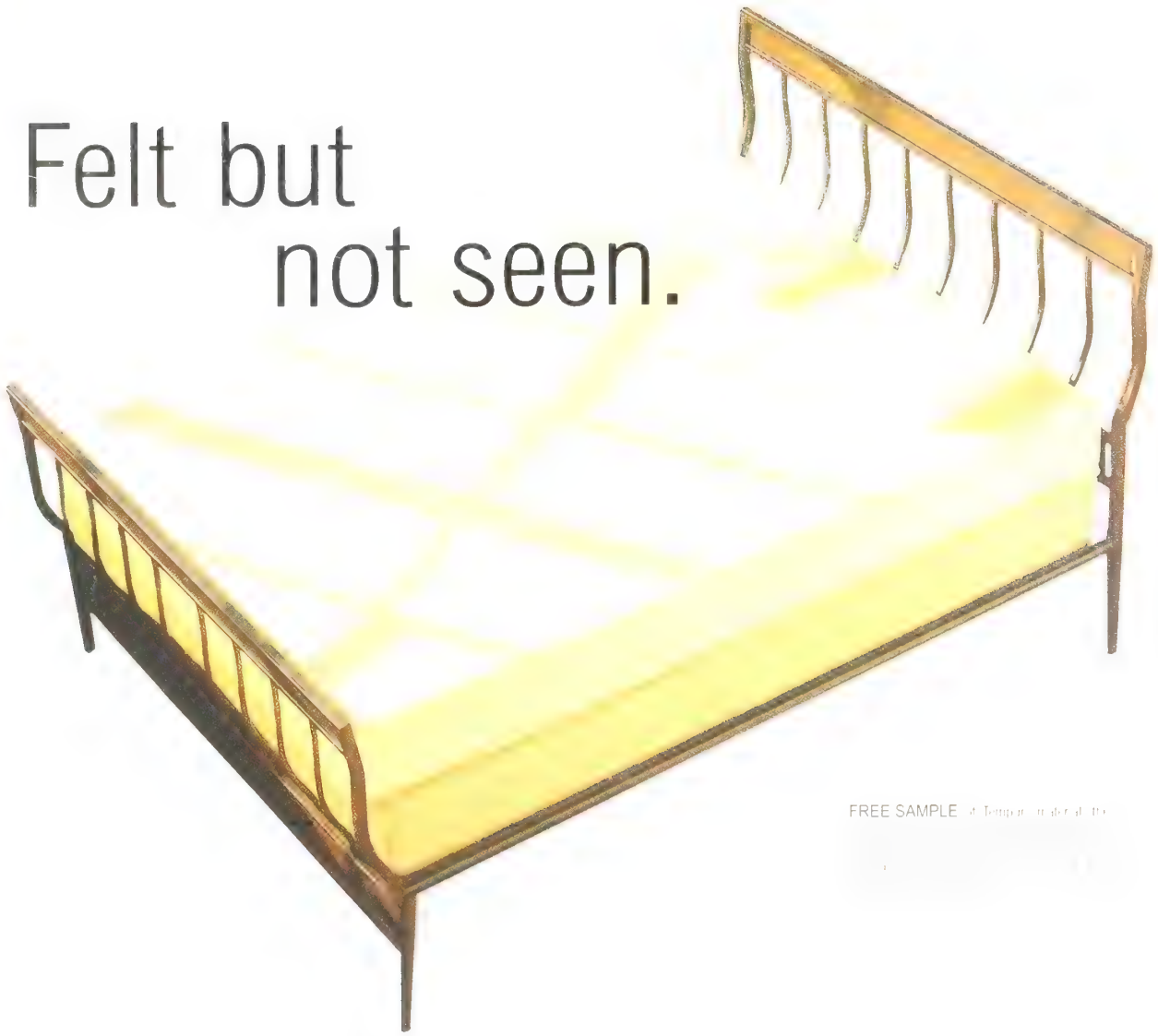
[Episode]

METHOD ACTING

From a prosecutor's remarks delivered during a 1971 criminal trial in which Tony Sirico, who portrays Paulie Walnuts on the television series The Sopranos, *was convicted of a felony and sentenced to a four-year term in prison. The sentencing judge proclaimed Sirico a "danger to society," and the court psychiatrist diagnosed him as having a "character disorder." The transcript was posted on* The Smoking Gun *(www.thesmokinggun.com) in February.*

Tony Sirico has been the subject of investigation by our office for a long time. He was indicted for extortion, coercion, and possession of a gun as a felony—charges stemming from vari-

Felt but not seen.



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TEMPUR-PEDIC

...ous threats he made to Mr. John Addison, owner of the Together discotheque at Fifty-ninth Street in Manhattan. The defendant entered that discotheque on several occasions, refused to pay at the door, refused to pay for any services or products, and when he was confronted by Mr. Addison and asked to pay he answered that he doesn't pay anyplace, that he's Junior Sirico, and that Mr. Addison better learn how to give him the respect he deserves, otherwise he knows what to do with Mr. Addison. He told Mr. Addison that he knows how to take care of guys like Mr. Addison: "You hit them over the head with a baseball bat, and they come around."

He said that he used to come to the discotheque when it was owned by a guy who had also given him a hard time by not giving him free food and drinks, but after he threw the bouncer out the window a few times the owner came around to his way of thinking. He said there was another place where he had been given a hard time, Steven Paul's The Scene, in Manhattan. He said he gave them such a hard time, he put them out of business and the owner had to leave town. He said there was another guy who'd given him a hard time, who had refused to comply with every wish and whim of Junior Sirico's, and that was Bobby Woods, and he said, "You saw what happened to him," and Mr. Addison knew what happened to Bobby Woods. Mr. Bobby Woods was found dead in Queens with five bullets in his head.

He told Mr. Addison that this could happen, and Mr. Addison was afraid, and he came to the District Attorney's Office and filed a complaint.

Now, on the night of the arrest, February 27, plainclothes detectives from the District Attorney's Office waited for Mr. Sirico outside the Together discotheque. They saw him go in with a couple of his friends, including Charlie Morris, who has an extensive and violent criminal record, and after a while they came out of the Together, got into a Lincoln Continental, and drove up to the West Side.

Two unmarked police cars followed them to the Upper West Side, where Mr. Sirico and his friends went into an apartment. Shortly afterward, Mr. Sirico exited the apartment with seven men. Some of them got into the Lincoln Continental, and the rest got into a Buick Riviera. Four of the detectives followed the Lincoln Continental, and two remained behind to follow the Buick Riviera.

The Buick Riviera proceeded toward Columbus Avenue and then suddenly pulled over to the side. Apparently they discovered that they were being tailed. The detectives didn't want to seem suspicious, so they drove right on by, and the Buick Riviera pulled out from the curb and got right on the bumper of the police car.

They followed the detectives to Columbus Avenue without letting them go. They followed across Columbus Avenue without letting them go. They followed them down to Amsterdam Avenue, still on their bumper, and across Amsterdam and down Broadway. The detectives realized they were in trouble and called for assistance, but they couldn't contact their brother officers.

[Memo]

ALLEGED KILLER AN ENIGMA

From a list of headlines for stories found in the Nexis news database containing the words "nice guy," "quiet," and "kept to himself." The list was compiled by Seth Ackerman, a media analyst at FAIR, a national media-watch group based in New [illegible]

[illegible]

SUICIDE VICTIM SUSPECTED IN 5 KILLINGS AT HOME

RICHMOND MAN FOUND SHOT DEAD IN HOUSE WHERE POT WAS GROWN

TROUBLED KILLER WAS ONCE TIRED, TEASED BY

BATON ROUGE MAN CHARGED IN KILLING, ON RAMPAGE

MAN KILLED IN DERAILMENT WAS A NOMAD,

"MAMA'S BOY" WITH TASTE FOR DIAMONDS

SIMMONS DESCRIBED AS "NICE" LONER

ARREST COMES AS A SHOCK TO SUSPECT'S

[illegible]

TRESPASS

At Seventy-second Street and Broadway the car that Mr. Sirico was in pulled out from behind the police vehicle, pulled right alongside it, and forced it into the divider. Mr. Sirico then began yelling, "What are you doing following me? I see you guys. I see you. I have eyes. I know what you are doing. What are you following me for?"

At that point the back window of Mr. Sirico's car started to go down very slowly, and the detectives became afraid, and they stepped on the gas and snaked their way out of there, but Mr. Sirico's car continued to follow. They followed them down Broadway and up to Columbus Avenue, but a marked police car came by, and the car that Mr. Sirico was riding in left the scene.

The detectives later saw Mr. Sirico and the other men in the Lincoln Continental back at the Together, and that's when they found out what his intentions were for that night.

Mr. Sirico went up to John Addison and said, "I'm going to come back here, and I'm going to carve my initials in your forehead. You put those guys on me. I'm going to take care of . . . You want to play with guns? We got guns. We're going to shoot them. There is going to be shots fired. There is going to be a war. I have an arsenal of weapons and an army of men, and I'm going to use them, and after I take care of those guys I'm going to come back here and carve my initials in your forehead. You better learn a lesson; you better show me the respect I deserve."

Mr. Addison panicked. He ran out into the street, and he ran to the 19th Precinct, and he told them what had happened. They advised him that they'd take care of it. When he came back to the Together he saw the men in the car, and he stopped and asked, "Excuse me, are you police officers?" And they said, "Yes." He said, "I have a problem." And then Mr. Addison told the police officers what had happened that night, and what had happened before, and what was going to happen to the two detectives who had followed Mr. Sirico, so two of the detectives entered the Together. There was another detective doing undercover work inside the restaurant, and they grabbed Mr. Sirico, one holding each arm, and they escorted him out of the premises. When they got him out they put him up against the wall, and Mr. Sirico, even then, surrounded by six detectives, tried to put up a fight. They put him up against the wall again, and they took from his waistband a loaded .32-caliber automatic, and Mr. Sirico's main concern, after all this, was that he wanted to see that gun.

He kept saying—when he was being put in the car, when he was brought to the station house, when he was in the station house—"Let me see the gun. Let me see it. I want to see which gun you got. Let me see the gun for a second. You can take the bullets, just let me see which gun."

[EXTRACT]

WHAT'S THE FREQUENCY, KENNETH?

From an interview conducted by CIA special agent [illegible] with Kenneth [illegible], a CIA officer in 1990. [illegible] past metal detectors in the U.S. Capitol building and allegedly shot and killed two Capitol police officers. After declaring Weston incompetent in 1999, Judge Emmet G. Sullivan ruled in March 2001 that he must be forcibly medicated to stand trial. If convicted, Weston could face the death penalty.

[illegible] Okay, this is not classified or sensitive national-security nature. I hope you're ready to hear it all.

AGENT McNEVIN: I'm ready. That's why I'm here.

WESTON: Okay, I am a clone. You understand what I mean by clone.

McNEVIN: You mean you're a facsimile of someone else?

WESTON: No, what it means is that people are bombarded with a microwave before they're born, and inside the microwave there is a scalar electromagnetic wave, and what it does is, is it essentially mutates the cells, is what it does.

[illegible]

WESTON: Okay, at the top of the page, above my name, write "the assassination of John F. Kennedy."

McNEVIN: Okay.

WESTON: Okay, first off, John F. Kennedy was making a movie called *My Favorite Roses*, or *My [illegible]*, and he searched the United States for some actors, you know, to play the roles.

McNEVIN: Mm-hmm.

WESTON: Do you get the president's radio station?

McNEVIN: No.

WESTON: Okay, it has to do with the making of songs. It's called the Oldies.

McNEVIN: Mm-hmm.

[illegible] And I will [illegible] those Oldies there are references to the [illegible]

McNEVIN: Mm-hmm.

WESTON: In John F. Kennedy's movie there were three actors: me myself, which is Rusty Weston, Sandy Brown, and Bill Clinton.

McNEVIN: Okay.

WESTON: And, of course, President Kennedy had background checks on us. I passed with flying colors. Sandy Brown passed [illegible] Bill Clinton did not pass with flying colors.

McNEVIN: Surprising.

WESTON: Bill Clinton was buying and selling cocaine to Coca-Cola. And he was using the proceeds of his drug sales to fund the interactive television system in which the picture tube is acting as a camera. And John F. Kennedy decided that it would be great for defense purposes to have control of the interactive television system. So he confiscated that system from Bill Clinton.

McNEVIN: Mm-hmm.

WESTON: Now we go off into another person. Her name is Patty Cocaritz. Okay, now, you might say women are always changing their names. Her next name is Norma Jean Coca, and then Marilyn Monroe. And she happens to be my second cousin. And, of course, she came to Little Rock, Arkansas, because she heard Bill Clinton had a lot of money, and jumped him. And, of course, at the time John F. Kennedy was confiscating Bill Clinton's interactive television system. And that's how the relationship started between John F. Kennedy and Marilyn Monroe.

[Small circle]

WESTON: Oh, yeah, it's quite a story. By the way, you're also sworn to extreme secrecy on this too. By you knowing this story, likely you will end up dying for it. Let's put it that way.

McNEVIN: I'll have to be careful.

WESTON: You'll have to be extremely careful. You will find out that after this your life will go extremely sour because of it.

Okay, we'll go back to the movie. President Kennedy hired Joe Voilietti to be my bodyguard. Okay, you have Joe Voilietti. You have Marilyn Monroe. And you've got Bill Clinton. Bill Clinton is not a native-born American. Bill Clinton is a Russian clone, brought to the United States for the purposes of Communist insurgency. And believe me, I've already talked to the director of the CIA here about this.

McNEVIN: Okay, brought to America for Communist insurgency?

WESTON: That's correct, yes. In Russia, they clone their children to be brilliant mathematicians.

McNEVIN: Okay.

WESTON: And that is Bill Clinton. He is a brilliant mathematician.

McNEVIN: Okay.

WESTON: Okay, the president is surrounded by Communist insurgents and organized-crime figures, and he has scalar electromagnetic paperwork. Organized criminal elements and Communists working together want to gain control of this paperwork and do away with John F. Kennedy because he has found out the plot.

McNEVIN: Now, what does this paperwork entail?

WESTON: The paperwork entails the whole mechanics of scalar nuclear magnetics.

McNEVIN: So this is basically how people get cloned?

WESTON: Yes.

McNEVIN: Oh.

WESTON: And it also has to do with surveillance work. In other words, they can beam programming right to your room without any special wiring.

McNEVIN: Like propaganda and stuff?

WESTON: It depends. You get orders that way. I get special programming from the president that way.

McNEVIN: President Clinton?

WESTON: Yes. Over the years, I've gotten special programming from almost all of the presidents.

McNEVIN: What kind of special programs?

WESTON: Recently, President Clinton sent me the president's golf classic.

McNEVIN: Yeah.

WESTON: And I live way up in the mountains in Montana, no reception at all. Suddenly, I've got the best reception in the world, and I'm watching the president's golf classic. Oh, and I get all kinds of other things too. All kinds of special performing artists who the president knows who do special performances for me. But anyway, I'll continue on with the main part of the story.

McNEVIN: Sure.

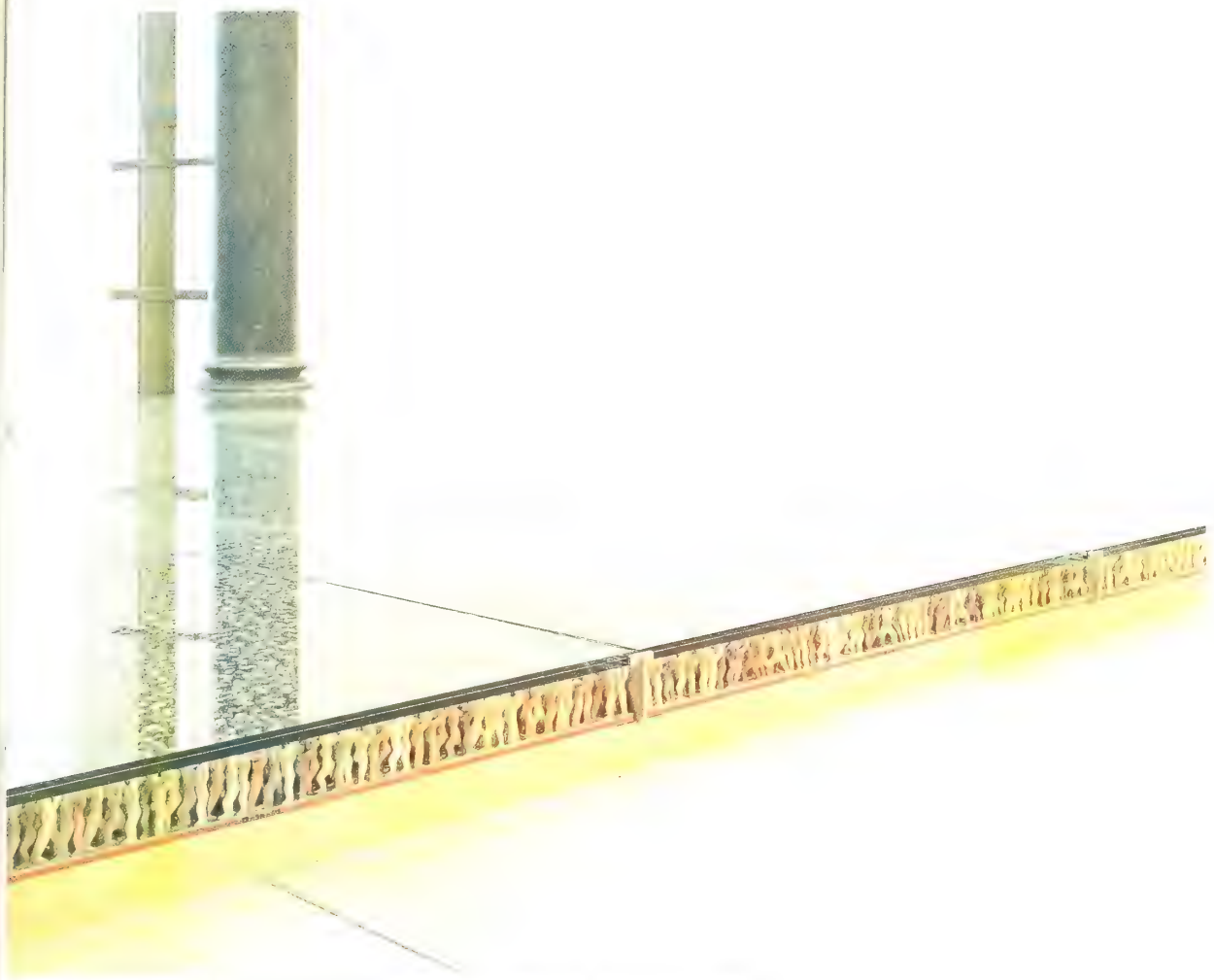
WESTON: Bill Clinton is mad because John F. Kennedy has stolen his girlfriend, confiscated his interactive television system, and cut off his cocaine supply.

[Pause.]

WESTON: And Bill Clinton comes to my grandfather's television repair shop and details how he is going to kill the president. But there are other interactive radio components in the shop, and one of the Republican listening posts picks it up and decides to make sure that the job gets done right, so they hire my bodyguard, Joe Voilietti. Okay, after Bill Clinton details the plan of how he is going to assassinate the president, I call the sheriff's department—and remember, I'm only six years old—and I tell them to teletype the president and tell them that Billy is going to kill him.

McNEVIN: Okay.

WESTON: That's on a Sunday, and the next Wednesday, John F. Kennedy is assassinated, shot apart in Dallas by two sharpshooters—Lee Harvey Oswald and Joe Voilietti. Okay, then after that, of course, Joe Voilietti sneaks into my house and puts positive ions in the food. Now, what positive ions do is they cause a child to get a fire-growing storm at high fever. In other words, that's an at-



tempt to make you forget about the incident.

Here I'm telling you all the tricks of the secret-game.

MCNEVIN: Hey. Does this fever make you delirious?

WESTON: Yes. It didn't make me forget, though. Like I was telling you, I was a clone to begin with. So it didn't quite work.

And then for the next number of years, every time there's a presidential election, my radio is made interactive and I get to debate the presidential incumbents.

MCNEVIN: This isn't public at all, right?

WESTON: Oh, no, not at all. The only way that you could get this is from a satellite they microwave my radio with.

MCNEVIN: Okay.

WESTON: I debated first when I was seven years old, then nine, then twelve, and every election since . . . oh, when Bill Clinton was running, I didn't debate him.

MCNEVIN: Why not?

WESTON: Okay, I'll tell you what they did. They started pulling Soviet energetics. In other words, through a microwave system they send you dreams, is what they are. Your eye has an optic purple on it. And your brain and your eyes are like a television camera. They emit a television signal at about 10 megahertz, which is the photon-electron coupling into the graviton. They beam this programming to you when you fall asleep at night. At about age twelve, I find out that not only can they give you the dreams, they can also read the photon-electron coupling that is coming off of your eyes. In other words, everything you think, they read it. In other words—just put down "reading thoughts."

MCNEVIN: Okay.

WESTON: Okay. And they also bombard you with bacterial warfare that is encapsulated in the scalar signal. I'll just say, yes, in my life, due to different Communist attacks, I

was involved in numerous automobile accidents caused by Soviet energetics. If somebody pulls up behind you and they're supposed to stop for you, they can whack that person with a graviton beam and just knock them out. And it causes an automobile accident. And that is being done now on a very large scale by the Soviets. And they did the same thing to about three of my girlfriends. They were either murdered or killed in automobile accidents. And the ones they like, they just drive them insane. Three of them were just methodically driven insane. And they're still alive, and they are being continuously bombarded with scalar magnetic.

MCNEVIN: Mm-hmm.

WESTON: They can elevate or de-elevate your [illegible] from extreme depression to schizophrenic paranoia. In other words, they can send you all the way from suicide to killing people.

[Pause.]

WESTON: And how they perpetrate the suicide part is they microwave a dead person in the ground, say, like a recently dead corpse, and place a dream into the mind of that dead person.

MCNEVIN: Mm-hmm.

WESTON: And it activates that person's brain, wakes them up. And they put the dream in there. And then they let it sit there for maybe just a very short time. And then they withdraw it back out again.

MCNEVIN: And what does that do to the corpse?

WESTON: It doesn't do anything to the person. But it does some stuff to the signal, to the dream. It gives the dream the sense of death, gives it that underlying feeling of morbidness.

[Pause.]

WESTON: Then they beam that to somebody else.

[Pause.]

WESTON: And what I specialize in is the nuclear-magnetic rod. With the rod, I go around and I check different areas. In other words, I can tell where the microwave beam is coming from, who it's going through, what cemetery the dreams are being stored in.

MCNEVIN: So then . . .

WESTON: No, we have to continue on here.

MCNEVIN: Right.

WESTON: This will all go up to the director.

MCNEVIN: Okay. You've talked to him about this already, you said?

WESTON: Yes, he knows the story. I'm just here giving additional information.

MCNEVIN: How long has he known the story?

WESTON: Oh, as the director of the CIA I would imagine probably quite a number of years. He has access to a great deal of information.

MCNEVIN: Of course.

WESTON: Okay, the murders, the girls, the car accidents. Then we go up to 1983, and I'm in Washington University Hospital in St. Louis. They are supposed to be just giving me a blood test. And there was about, oh,

AS IF I'D CEASED TO BE

"Edmund and Elena Wilson Have Dinner with Edna St. Vincent Millay and Her Husband, Eugen Boissevain, August 6, 1948," by James Cummins, in the Fall 2000 issue of The Paris Review.

Is it hot in here, or is it just me?
They both seem so much older now than I—
can this be so? Do women age like dogs,
or something out of Wilde? Seven years,
for every one we live? He cuts her meat.

Good God, that inward stare! I loved her so.
The self-absorption's thickened like her hide.
I knew all this before, of course. I knew.
And got out early like the pig I am.
She's jowly, tense. *Elderly*. It's nineteen years . . .

What was Elena saying when they left?
Arm in arm, as if I'd ceased to be?
They walked along the garden for an hour,
Elena kindly offering E. her laugh.
Two women, arm in arm, whose toes I've—

What? What'd I say? Blurted something out—
[illegible]
are forming on the brow of Mt. Monadnock.
I've added to the burden of his days!
[illegible]

Why are they looking at me with such hate?
Why can't I just remember what I said?
We've drunk too much; we always drink too much.
I hear *Herself*—she calls my name loudly,
a tone of bemusement hiding her rage:

[illegible]
or must the three of us go over there,
and by God take the boat by force?" I see
Elena's face, alarmed; I look at Gene,
[illegible]

at those gravy-less potatoes. I stare
again at E., at E.—are we *all* insane?
"Of course," I mumble, "the gravy." I look
about wildly—thank God, it's near my plate!
Is there no window in this goddamn house?

brain-washing drug developed by George Bush, imported by Bill Clinton, that they put into the food supply of America.

MCNEVIN: So this could be affecting me.

WESTON: Mm-hmm.

MCNEVIN: Yeah.

WESTON: If I had my rod here, I'd check you. No doubt you probably have it, too. Anyway, then I decide, well, since there's so much trouble, I'm going to move back to Montana, and as soon as I get to my house and turn on the radio, there's the whole gang again: Joe Volhetti, Marilyn Monroe—still alive. And [illegible] dio. I get a hundred death threats a day. And Bill Clinton begins to threaten to detonate one of the atomic bombs buried in Montana. And, of course, I'm running all over the hills trying to make sure that Bill does not detonate them. And in the process Bill gets pretty doggone mad at me. I end up in the hospital from phosgene poisoning in the soup. And he sneaks into my grandmother's house and murders my Aunt Lucille. And I hear about it, and I'm jumping. I call the FBI, and they make Bill go on the interactive radio and sing an apology.

MCNEVIN: Okay, so he did apologize?

WESTON: Oh, of course.

MCNEVIN: It sure doesn't make it right, though.

WESTON: No, it surely doesn't, does it? And, of course, through this whole ordeal, I'm taking notes, because that will prove the existence . . . not everybody gets the radio station that I get.

MCNEVIN: Yeah.

WESTON: But, of course, the director knows this already. But the thing about it is, is all over the United States in different areas, you get different radio announcers on the presidential radio station. Like in Helena, I get the old circle of assassins that killed John F. Kennedy. And in other parts of the United States, I get different announcers.

In other words, over the last thirty-three years, Bill Clinton is in touch with quite a few songwriters. And he just tells the songwriters what's going on and they write music about it. In other words, on the Oldie radio station, you'll find that probably 50 to 60 percent of the songs on there are written about me and Bill and the fight we've had over the last thirty-three years. But the trouble with that is that code name Mom is also singing.

MCNEVIN: Who's Mom?

WESTON: Janet Reno.

MCNEVIN: Reno's involved in it?

WESTON: Oh, yes. And I have some really good recordings of her singing. Yeah, boy, she can really sing a tune. Anyway, every time I have trouble with Bill, I call the Department of Defense and say, look, Bill's whacking me [illegible]

WESTON: —do something with him. And they usually do.

And we'll bring it up to date. You notice, this last few weeks here, we've had airline disasters and bombings? That's what Bill does. Every time I start to have a fight with Bill he gets mad and starts doing a lot of damage. The airplane crashes, the bombing in Saudi Arabia—all Bill's doing.

MCNEVIN: So, you're doing your best to prevent this stuff, is that . . .

WESTON: Well, I do my best to bring Bill to justice. But he is so powerful that he is singing on the radio that he is going to be king of the world.

MCNEVIN: So, what do you think can be done about the situation?

WESTON: What are you going to do with a man who has control of the satellite that can dis-

WE HUV TAE FIGHT TAE PERTY

W

Every other cunt's waitin in the front gairdin. The balcony makes a barry deein space. The boys uv goat enough cable for the speakers n ah've got the amp an mixer up wi ays. It takes aboot twenty minutes tae rig the whole thing up.

They kick out, wi this boy called Luther on the decks. Eh's no bad n aw. Ah'm itchin tae git oan, tae show they Jerry cunts whit ah kin dae.

Marcia's still miserable, her distress compounded by Lawson's hiverings. — It's awright, doll, a perty eh, Terry goes. — See, eh explains tae her, — we huv tae fight tae perty. The difference, eh elaborates tae her and the other bemused Germans standing around, is that we're West Edinburgh Hibs. We've had tae fight tae

[illegible] Hey, Jimmie, I'm [illegible]

[illegible] the lassie. She has her hands ower her ears. — It is so loud.

Wolfgang's nodding away in time tae the beat, [illegible] says, tae a big cheer tae Terry n me.

Gally's got intae a wild, sensuous, ecstasy lock wi they two Bundeshga birds, it takes ays a while tae see it's that Elsa n Gudrun. The three ay them are snoggin each other slowly in turns. Eh stoaps fir a bit and shouts at ays, — Carl, c'mere. Stand [illegible] Gudrun.

Tell yis what, ah goes, you two are the most beautiful lookin birds I've ever seen in ma life.

– You're no wrong there, Gally confirms.

Elsa laughs, but in an engaged way and goes, I think that you are one of the [illegible] meet when you are taking ecstasy.

Too right, ah tell her, but ah eywis mean it. And ah do. Elsa and Gudrun, what a package. Aye, that's what's so great about these kind ay scenes. You can admire the beauty of a woman, but when you see a load of them standing together, the sheer overwhelming effect really just does blow you away.

[illegible] Right, c'mere.

The lassies are aw smiles so ah go ahead, snoggin wi one bird, then the other. Then Gally snogs them baith again. Then the two birds start snoggin each other. Ma hert's gaun boom-boom-boom n Gally raises they eyebrows. Women are so fuckin beautiful and men are such dogs, if ah wis a bird ah'd be a dyke for defo. Whin they brek oat, one ay them goes, Now you two must do the same.

Gally n me just look at each other n laugh.

Nae fuckin chance, ah goes.

Ah'll gie the cunt a hug, that's aw, eh says, cause ah love the big bastard, even if eh is a [illegible]

[illegible] him tae include me in ehs wee scene thaire. That's a true mate. Ah crush the fucker in a hug, whisperin "CSF" sweetly in his ear.

Git a fuckin mob, eh laughs, breakin oft n pushin ays in the chest.

Ah head oat back tae the decks tae check oot [illegible] records n efter borrowin some tae Rolf ah've goat enough tae dae a good forty-five minutes quality mixin. Ah git ready tae hit the decks. The mixer looks a bit unfamiliar or maybe it's just the pills, but fuck it, jist git in thaire.

Terry's jumping aroond beside ays, [illegible]

N-SIGN Ewart. That's ma man, eh sais, shakin this German guy n pointin at ays — N-SIGN. Ah gied um that stage name. N-SIGN Ewart!

Ah dunno what Terry's daein talkin aboot German cunts, cause ehs an Ma wis shaggin one [illegible] Ah'm in [illegible] Beltram's *Energy Flash*. Instant explosion oan the flair! Ah've soon goat the punters gaun, the music's flowing through me, through the vinyl, right oot the speakers and intae the crowd. Even though I'm [illegible] them in bits through the headphones, before ah play them, but it's coming out fine. It's a dug's breakfast as well, I'm mixing [illegible] rave tracks like *Beat This* and *We Call It Acieed* in with old Chicago house anthems like *Love Can't Turn Around* and taking it right back up through to Belgium hardcore, like this track *Inssomniak*.

But it aw works; these shaking erses and the fill dance-space are sending me a message:

I am fuckme right on it here.

Some cunt's been oan the blower cause thir's mair cars comin in n the whole party's below me oan that front lawn wi thir hands in the air n ah've never felt sae good. This is the best yin ever. At the end ay it, every cunt's ower, shakin ma hand, huggin me, fill ay praise. It's real praise as well, no bullshit. Ye get soas ye can tell the difference. It embarrasses the fuck oot ay ays when ah'm straight, but E'd up, ye just accept it.

Gally comes ower tae ays. Eh's goat one ay they lassies by the hand n eh's pointin ower at Wolfgang who's dancin slowly, shakin ehs heid n huggin every cunt that crosses his path.

– That Wolfgang, eh, a definite capital gadge!

Eh pulls oot the eckies n tries tae gie ays one.

– Ah'll take it in a minute, ah goes, stickin it in the top poakit ay ma shirt. The pill ay hud earlier is runnin doon but ah want tae keep oan this adrenalin rush right now. Eh's hingin aboot wi Rolf, thir talkin about [illegible] quality n aw that. Ah look at Rolf; a mair pristine, German, less manic, less fucked-up Gally. What Gally might've been like had circumstances been different in um. Mind you, ye dinnae really ken the Rolf boy, it just that eh seems sussed oot.

Galloway: what is that wee cunt like? The boy's oat ehs tits, talkin aboot lovin every cunt n this bein the greatest night ay ehs life. At one point eh stands oot oan the balcony tae a big cheer n gies a clenched-fist salute. Rolf just smiles, hudin oantae Gally's leg, n helpin um doon.

The sun comes up and we're tryin tae help by tidyin up the debris, while still pertyin at the same time. Thir isnae too much ay a mess, the punters have respected the hoose. Despite the warmth fae the sun, it's mistier and caulder now. It's startin tae feel like October; winter's diggin in. Gally's still up, as high as a kite, eh's goat Gudrun oan ehs knee n eh's talking shite. Ah'm



"Days of 47, Salt Lake City, Utah," by Craig Peterson, oil pastel on sandstone with charcoal and oil

sitting next tae them oan the couch, wonderin where that Elsi lassie has goat tae. Ah swallay the other pill and wait for it tae kick in. Thir's still a few people left ower, though the main heads tae the system have packed up. We're back oantae Wolfgang's smaller amp, mixer, and speakers. Rolf's daein a mellow set, which sounds okay. Gally says tae me, — Ah've goat tae give it tae ye, Carl, ye wir brilliant. You've goat something, man. Like Billy, wi the boxin. Ye kin mix a tune. The likes ay me, we've goat fuck all. You're Business Birrell, eh nods tae Billy, whae's sittin crouched oan the floor, then tae me, — n you're N-SIGN.

Ah make fleetin eye contact wi Billy n we're shruggin. Gally's never talked like this before, bummin us up, and the cunt means it n aw. Gally. Then ah look ower at Terry, sittin oan a beanbag wi Hedra. Eh's no worked for ages. Ah kin see thit eh's no happy about what Gally's said. — Hi Gudrun, that's N-SIGN Ewart, eh points at me and eh's said that one hundred times at least aw night, which is still less than Terry, but eh's shakin the lassie soas she looks at ays, n eh's gaun, — N-SIGN. Eh wis in that mag fae *DJ*, youse might no git it here . . . it hud a bit aboot the up n comin DJ's fir the nineties . . .

Ah dinnae think Terry bothers that much but. He'll always get by, duckin n divin. It's the nature ay the beast.

The Gudrun lassie stands up n goes tae the bogs. She's a wee honey n aw, n ah watch her depart, appreciating her easy, graceful movements. Gally doesnae seem tae be noticing thaneh, cause eh looks at ays, then eh's starin ahead intae space.

– They tell ye that ah seen the barn, wi her n him, before we came oot here?

Terry and Billy both mentioned it tae ays. It didnae sound good. Ah grind ma teeth. Right now ah'm no really wantin tae hear aboot the Gally n Gail n Polmont show, featuring [illegible] guests Alexander "Dow" Doyle an Eddie "Business" Birrell, yet again. No here. No the now. But the boy is upset. — How's she daein? ah ask.

Gally's still lookin oot intae [illegible] want tae meet ma eyes. Ehs voice goes low. — Didnae really ken me, eh no. Calls him dad dy. Him, eh.

Terry's heard this, and eh takes a toke fae a splitt [illegible] and shruggin tae Gally

[illegible] Mine calls that cunt dad dy n aw. A big, fuckin gawky twat, n he calls him daddy. It's jist the wey it goes but, eh. He's the cunt that pays the mosh in her mooth n that's it

– Dismae make it right! Gally says, it comin oot in a panicky primal shriek. And ah'm feelin for the cunt now, really feelin for Gally, cause it's the worse thing in the world for him.

– She'll mind ay ye, Gally, it jist needs time, ah say. Ah dinnae ken why ah opened ma mooth, ah've no goat a clue, it jist seemed the right thing tae say.

Gally's really gone intae a bad frame ay mind. It's like thir's a cloud above ehs heid n it's gittin blacker by the minute. — Naw, the bairn's better oaf without me. Yir right, Terry. It's just a blob ay spunk, that's aw ah wis ivir fuckin worth, eh sais, ehs face aw twisted. — Jist aboot ma first fuckin ride. Offay Gail. Eighteen years auld. Delighted that ah'd popped ma cherry. How unlucky is that . . . ah mean . . . ah dinnae mean that . . .

Ah glance at Terry, whar raises his eyebrows. Ah've nivir heard Gally talk like that before. Mind you, ah thought the cunt never goat ehs hole back in the early days. Thir wis eywis talk but a lot ay it wis silly talk. The playgroond, the canteen, the pub. No always, but often.

Ah'm feelin great n aw. Ah dinnae want this, ah want Gally tae feel like me. — Look, this conversation's gittin a wee bit depressin. It's a perty! Fuck sake, Gally! You're a young, fit man!

– Ah'm a fuckin waster, a fuckin druggy, eh scoffs in self-loathing.

Ah look at his wee baby face n pinch ehs cheek between ma thumb and forefinger. — Tell ye what, ye still look in pretty good nick, Gally, for [illegible]

Eh's still no buyin it but. — It's aw inside but, mate, eh laughs in a low, hollow wey that chills me. Then eh looks a bit thoughtful and says,

Ye kin scrape a dug's shite oot the gutter n pit it in a fancy gift box wi a glittering bow, but it's still a piece ay dug shite in a boax, eh says harshly. [illegible]

[illegible] Gally, ah say, [illegible] ah said that ye looked awright, ah widnae go as far as a fancy gift box wi a glittering bow. Keep the fuckin heid, son! Efter aw, ah stand up, n launch intae ma impersonation ay auld Blackie fae the school; — Some say that there is no room for social education and religious knowledge in a modern comprehensive education system. I differ from this fashionable view. For how can an education system be truly comprehensive if it does not have SOCIAL education and RELIGIOUS knowledge?

At last the cunt starts laughin. Billy's been listenin tae aw this and rises tae his feet.

– C'moan, Gally, lit's take a wee walk, Billy says, n Gally stands up. That Gudrun lassie's comin back n Billy stands back n nods tae Gally. Eh cheers up even mair and they head off thegither, intae the gairdin.

Wolfgang's oan the decks now, and eh's takin things back up again. Rolf's shakin ehs heid n laughin. The big cunt's pit a killer track oan though, n ah'm feeling the tingling nausea ay this pill digging in and if ah dinnae git up right now ah'll gouch right oot. People are comin oaf the beanbags n chairs, oantae thir feet, oantae the flair. Ah must git a copy ay that yin, find oot what it is. The flair's fill ay Germans dancing, aw except Marcia, who is, as they say, not amused. The Germans are awright, that Nazi shite could happen anywhere. They tell us that Nazis are weird, but thir probably nae weirder or mair perverted thin liberals. It wis jist thit times changed n every cunt flipped ower. It could happen anytime, anywhaire. It seems tae me that the wey things are gaun, capitalism's eywis gaunny be volatile. The rich'll throw in thir loat wi any cunt that restores order but'll let them keep what they've goat. It'll happen again within the next thirty years.

That's the thing that goat me. The Nazis arenae some cunt else. Every cunt, every nation's goat it in them tae dae evil jist like every person hus. N they usually dae it cause thir scared or cause thir pit doon by every cunt else. The world's only gaunny git better wi love n ah'm gaunny help spread it through music. That's ma mission, that's why ah'm N-SIGN. Carl Ewart, they nivir liked that boy, cause he wis the daft laddie that gave the Nazi salute in front ay the tabloid photographer tae wind them up when eh wis wi ehs fitba mates. A daft laddie, didnae even ken what a Nazi wis, only that he'd always been taught tae detest them. Eh jist kent that it wound up every posh cunt in that work who looked at him and heard his schemie voice and thought that eh was white trash.

They didnae like Carl Ewart, white-trash schemie. But they liked N-SIGN. N-SIGN's played at warehoose perties in London, raised funds for anti-racist groups, aw sorts ay deserving community organisations. They love N-SIGN. They'll never, ever get thir heids roond the fact that the only difference between Carl Ewart and N-SIGN is that one worked liftin boxes in a warehoose for nae money while the other played records in one fir tons ay it. That they choose tae treat the two so different tells ye a loat mair aboot thaim than it does aboot Carl Ewart or N-SIGN. Fuck all that though, ah'm gaunny be smart and righteous fae now on. Tae be touched by real love requires great fortune, it's no in your hands. The best ye can do, what *is* in yir power, is tae acquire grace. ■

AMERICAN PLAYHOUSE

On politics and the art of acting

By Arthur Miller

Here are some observations about politicians as actors. Since some of my best friends are actors, I don't dare say anything bad about the art itself. The fact is that acting is inevitable as soon as we walk out our front doors and into society. I am acting now; certainly I am not using the same tone as I would in my living room. It is not news that we are moved more by our glandular reactions to a leader's personality, his acting, than by his proposals or by his moral character. To their millions of followers, after all, many of them highly regarded university intellectuals, Hitler and Stalin were profoundly moral men, revealers of new truths. Aristotle thought man was by nature a social animal, and indeed we are ruled more by the social arts, the arts of performance—by acting, in other words—than anybody wants to think about for very long.

In our own time television has created a quantitative change in all this; one of the oddest things about millions of lives now is that ordinary individuals, as never before in human history, are so surrounded by acting. Twenty-four hours a day everything seen on the tube is either acted or conducted by actors in the shape of news anchormen and -women, including their hairdos. It may be that the most impressionable form of experience now for many if not most people consists in their emotional transactions with actors, which happen far more of the time than with real people. In the past, a person might have confronted the arts of performance once a year in a church ceremony or in a rare appearance by a costumed prince or king and his ritualistic gestures; it would have seemed a very strange idea that ordinary folk would be so subjected every day to

This essay was adapted from the 2001 Jefferson Lecture, sponsored annually by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Established in 1972, the Jefferson Lecture is the highest honor bestowed by the federal government for distinguished achievement in the humanities. Arthur Miller's many plays include Death of a Salesman and The Crucible. His memoir "A Line to Walk On" appeared in the November 2000 issue of Harper's Magazine.

POLITICAL LEADERS EVERYWHERE HAVE COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT TO GOVERN THEY MUST LEARN HOW TO ACT

the persuasions of professionals whose studied technique, after all, was to assume the character of someone else.

Is this persistent experience of any importance? I can't imagine how to prove this, but it seems to me that when one is surrounded by such a roiling mass of consciously contrived performances it gets harder and harder to locate reality anymore. Admittedly, we live in an age of entertainment, but is it a good thing that our political life, for one, be so profoundly governed by the modes of theater, from tragedy to vaudeville to farce? I find myself speculating whether the relentless daily diet of crafted, acted emotions and canned ideas is not subtly pressing our brains not only to mistake fantasy for what is real but to absorb this falseness into our personal sensory process. This last election is an example. Apparently we are now called upon to act as though nothing very unusual happened and as though nothing in our democratic process has deteriorated, including our claim to the right to instruct lesser countries on how to conduct fair elections. So, in a subtle way, we are induced to become actors, too. The show, after all, must go on, even if the audience is obligated to join in the acting.

Political leaders everywhere have come to understand that to govern they must learn how to act. No differently than any actor, Al Gore went through several changes of costume before finding the right mix to express the personality he wished to project. Up to the campaign he seemed an essentially serious type with no great claim to humor, but the presidential-type character he had chosen to play was apparently happy, upbeat, with a kind of Bing Crosby mellowness. I daresay that if he seemed so awkward it was partly because he had cast himself in a role that was wrong for him. As for George W. Bush, now that he is president he seems to have learned not to sneer quite so much, and to cease furtively glancing left and right when leading up to a punch line, followed by a sharp nod to flash that he has successfully delivered it. This is bad acting, because all the dire overemphasis casts doubt on the text. Obviously, as the sparkly magic veil of actual power has descended upon him, he has become more relaxed and confident, like an actor after he has had some hit reviews and knows the show is in for a run.

At this point I suppose I should add something about my own bias. I recall the day, back in the fifties, during Eisenhower's campaign against Adlai Stevenson, when I turned on my television and saw the general who had led the greatest invasion force in history lying back under the hands of a professional makeup woman preparing him for his TV appearance. I was far more naive then, and so I still found it hard to believe that henceforth we were to be wooed and won by rouge, lipstick, and powder rather than ideas and positions on public issues. It was almost as though he were getting ready to assume the role of General Eisenhower instead of simply *being* him. In politics, of course, what you see is rarely what you get, but Eisenhower was not actually a good actor, especially when he ad-libbed, disserving himself as a nearly comical bumbler with the English language when in fact he was a lot more literate and sophisticated than his public-speaking style suggested. As his biographer, a *Life* editor named Emmet John Hughes, once told me, Eisenhower, when he was still a junior officer, was the author of those smoothly liquid, rather Roman-style speeches that had made his boss, Douglas MacArthur, so famous. Then again, I wonder if Eisenhower's syntactical stumbling in public made him seem more convincingly sincere.

Watching some of our leaders on TV has made me wonder if we really have any idea what is involved in the actor's art, and I recall again a story once told me by my old friend the late Robert Lewis, director of a number of beautiful Broadway productions, including the original *Brigadoon*. Starting out as an actor in the late twenties, Bobby had been the assistant and dresser of Jacob Ben-Ami, a star in Europe and in New York as well. Ben-Ami, an extraordinary actor, was in a Yiddish play, but despite the language and the location of the theater far from Times

uare, on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, one of its scenes had ned it into a substantial hit with English-speaking audiences. Experi-cing that scene had become the in thing to do in New York. People ho had never dreamed of seeing a Yiddish play traveled downtown to tch this one scene, and then left. In it Ben-Ami stood at the edge of e stage staring into space and, with tremendous tension, brought a re-lver to his head. Seconds passed, whole minutes. Some in the audience ut their eyes or turned away, certain the shot was coming at any instant. n-Ami clenched his jaws. Sweat broke out on his face. His eyes seemed out to pop out of his head; his hands trembled as he strove to will him-lf to suicide. More moments passed. People in the audience were gasp-g for breath and making strange asphyxiated noises. Finally, standing on s toes now as though to leap into the unknown, Ben-Ami dropped the n and cried out, "Ikh ken nit!" I can't do it! Night after night he ought the house down; Ben-Ami somehow compelled the audience to spend its disbelief and to imagine his brains splattered all over the stage.

Lewis, aspiring young actor that he was, begged Ben-Ami to tell him ie secret of how he created this emotional reality, but the actor kept atting him off, saying he ould tell him only after the fi-il performance. "It's better for eople not to know," he said, r it'll spoil the show."

Then at last the final perfor-ance came, and at its end en-Ami sat in his dressing m with the young Lewis.

"You promised to tell me," ewis said.

"All right. I'll tell you. My roblem with this scene," Ben-Ami explained, "was that I per-onally could never blow my rains out. I am just not suici-al, and I can't imagine ending ny life. So I could never really now how that man was feel-ng, and I could never play such person authentically. For veeks I went around trying to hink of some parallel in my own life that I could draw on. What situation ould I be in where, first of all, I am standing up, I am alone, I am looking traight ahead, and something I feel I must do is making me absolutely errified, and finally that whatever it is I can't do it?"

"Yes," Lewis said, hungry for this great actor's key to greatness. "And hat is that?"

"Well," Ben-Ami said, "I finally realized that the [illegible] than anything is washing in cold water. So what I'm really doing with that gun to my head is, I'm trying to get myself to step into an ice-cold shower."

Now, if we translate this situation to political campaigns, who are we really voting for? The self-possessed character who projects dignity, exemplary morals, and enough forthright courage to lead us through war or depression, or the person who is simply good at creating a counterfeit with the help of professional coaching, executive tailoring, and that whole armory of pretense that the groomed president can now employ? Are we allowed anymore to know what is going on not merely in the candidate's facial expression and his choice of suit but also in his head? Unfortunately, as with Ben-Ami, this is something we are not told until the [illegible]

ARE WE ALLOWED TO KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON NOT MERELY IN THE CANDIDATE'S CHOICE OF SUIT BUT ALSO IN HIS HEAD?



BOTH BUSH AND GORE HAD TO ACT THEMSELVES OUT OF THEIR REAL PERSONAE AND INTO FRESHLY BEGOTTEN ONES



millions of dollars, neither candidate—at least for me—ever managed to create that unmistakable click of recognition as to who he really was. But maybe this is asking too much. As with most actors, any resemblance between the man and the role is purely accidental.

The Stanislavsky system came into vogue at the dawn of the twentieth century, when science was recognized as the dominating force of the age. Objective scientific analysis promised to open everything to human control, and the Stanislavsky method was an attempt to systematize the actor's vagrant search for authenticity as he works to portray a character different from his own. Politicians do something similar all the time; by assuming personalities not genuinely theirs—let's say six-pack, lunchbox types—they hope to connect with ordinary Americans. The difficulty for Bush and Gore in their attempts to seem like regular fellas was that both were scions of successful and powerful families. Worse yet for their regular-fella personae, both were in effect created by the culture of Washington, D.C., and you can't hope to be president without running against Washington. The problem for Gore was that Washington meant Clinton, whom he dared not acknowledge lest he be challenged on moral grounds. As for Bush, he was forced to impersonate an outsider pitching against dependency on the federal government, whose payroll, however, had helped feed two generations of his family. There's a name for this sort of cannonading of Washington; it is called acting. To some important degree both gentlemen had to act themselves out of their real personae into freshly begotten ones. The reality, of course, was that the closest thing on the political stage to a man of the people was Clinton the Unclean, the real goods with the six-pack background, whom it was both dangerous and necessary to disown. This took a monstrous amount of acting.

It was in the so-called debates that the sense of a contrived performance rather than a naked clash of personalities and ideas came to a sort of head. Here was acting, acting with a vengeance. But the consensus seems to have called the performances decidedly boring. And how could it be otherwise when both men seemed to be attempting to display the same genial temperament, a readiness to perform the same role and, in effect, to climb into the same warm suit? The role, of course, was that of the nice guy, Bing Crosby with a sprinkling of Bob Hope. Clearly they had both been coached not to threaten the audience with too much passion but rather to reassure that if elected they would not disturb any reasonable person's sleep. In acting terms there was no inner reality, no genuineness, no glimpse into their unruly souls. One remarkable thing did happen, though—a single, split-second shot that revealed Gore shaking his head in helpless disbelief at some inanity Bush had spoken. Significantly, this gesture earned him many bad reviews for what were called his superior airs, his sneering disrespect; in short, he had stepped out of costume and revealed his reality. This, in effect, was condemned as a failure of acting. In the American press, which is made up of disguised theater critics, substance counts for next to nothing compared with style and inventive characterization. For a millisecond Gore had been inept enough to have gotten real! And this clown wanted to be *president* yet! Not only is all the world a stage but we have all but obliterated the line between the feigned and the real.

Was there ever such a border? It is hard to know, but we might try to visualize the Lincoln-Douglas debates before the Civil War, when thousands would stand, spread out across some pasture, to listen to the two

peakers, who were mounted on stumps so they could be seen from far
f. There certainly was no makeup; neither man had a speechwriter but,
credibly enough, made it all up himself. Years later, Lincoln supposedly
rote the Gettysburg Address on scraps of paper while en route to a
emorial ceremony. Is it imaginable that any of our candidates could
ave such conviction and, more importantly, such self-assured candor as
pour out his heart this way? To be sure, Lincoln and Douglas were civ-
l at least in the record of their remarks, but their attack on each other's
eas was sharp and thorough, revealing of their actual approaches to the
ation's problems. As for their styles, they had to have been very differ-
nt than the current laid-back cool before the lens. The lens magnifies
verything: one slight lift of an eyelid and you look like you're glaring. It
here is a single, basic requirement for success on television it is minimal-
ation: whatever you are doing, do less of it and emit cool. In other
ords—act. In contrast, speakers facing hundreds of people without a
icrophone and in the open air must inevitably have been broader in
esture and even more emphatic in speech than in life. Likewise, their
se of language had to be more pointed and precise in order to carry their
oints out to the edges of the crowd. And no makeup artist stood waiting
wipe up every bead of sweat on a speaker's lip; the candidates were
tripped to their shirtsleeves in the summer heat, and people nearby
ould no doubt smell them. There may, in short, have been some aspect
f human reality in such a debate.

Given the camera's tendency to exaggerate any movement, it may in itself have a dampening effect on spontaneity and conflict. There were times in this last campaign when one even wondered whether the candidates feared that to raise issues and engage in a genuine clash before the camera might set fire to some of the more flammable public. They chose instead to forgo the telling scowl or the passionate outburst in favor of that which ran less risk of a social conflagration: benign smiles on a glass screen.

No differently than with actors, the single most important characteristic a politician needs to display is relaxed sincerity. Ronald Reagan disarmed his opponents by never showing the slightest sign of inner conflict about the truth of what he was saying. Simpleminded as his critics found his ideas and remarks, cynical and manipulative as he may have been in actuality, he seemed to believe every word he said. He could tell you that atmospheric pollution came from trees, or that ketchup was a vegetable in school lunches, or leave the impression that he had seen action in World War II rather than in a movie he had made or perhaps only seen, and if you didn't believe these things you were still kind of amused by how sincerely he said them. Sincerity implies honesty, an absence of moral conflict in the mind of its possessor. Of course, this can also indicate insensitivity or even stupidity. It is hard, for example, to think of another American official whose reputation would not have been stained by saluting a cemetery of Nazi dead with heartfelt solemnity while barely mentioning the many millions, including Americans, who were victims of that vile regime. But Reagan was not only an actor; he loved acting, and it can be said that at least in public he not only acted all the time but did so sincerely. The second best actor is Clinton, who does occasionally seem to blush, but then again he was caught in an illicit sexual act, which is far more important than illegally shipping weapons to foreign countries. Reagan's tendency to confuse events in films with things that really happened is often seen as intellectual weakness, but in reality it was—unknowingly, of course—a Stanislavskian triumph, the very consummation of the actor's ability to incorporate reality into the fantasy of his role. In Reagan the dividing line between acting and actuality was simply melted, gone. Human beings, as the poet said, cannot bear very much reality, and the art of politics is our best proof. The trouble is that a leader comes to

REAGAN'S TENDENCY TO CONFUSE EVENTS IN FILMS WITH THINGS THAT REALLY HAPPENED WAS A STANISLAVSKIAN TRIUMPH

MY IMPULSE IS TO SAY THAT ROOSEVELT WAS NOT AN ACTOR, BUT THIS IS PROBABLY BECAUSE HE WAS SUCH A GOOD ONE

symbolize his country, and so the nagging question is whether, when real trouble comes, we can act ourselves out of it.

The first obligation of the actor, just as with the politician, is to get himself known. P. T. Barnum said it for all time when a reporter asked if he wasn't ashamed at having tricked the public. He had originated the freak show, which had drawn an immense audience to his Bridgeport, Connecticut, barn to see the bearded lady and the two-headed calf. But the show was such a great hit that his problem was how to get people to leave and make room for new customers. His solution was to put up a sign, with an arrow pointing to the door, that read, "This way to the Egress." Since nobody had ever seen an "egress" before, the place emptied satisfactorily, and the audience found itself in the street. The reporter asked if this ploy wouldn't anger people and ruin his reputation. Barnum gave his historic reply: "I don't care what they write about me as long as they spell my name right." If there is a single rubric to express the most basic requirement for political or theatrical success, this is it.

Whether he admits it or not, the actor wants not only to be believed and admired but to be loved, and what may help to account for the dullness of this last campaign was the absence of affection for either man, not to speak of love. By the end it seemed like an unpopularity contest, a competition for who was less disliked by more people than the other, a demonstration of negative consent. Put another way, in theatrical terms these were character actors but not fascinating stars. Ironically, the exception to all this lovelessness was Nader, whose people, at least on television, did seem to adore their leader, even after he had managed to help wreck Gore and elect Bush, whom they certainly despised far more than they did Gore. At this point I ought to confess that I have known only one president whom I feel confident about calling "the President of the United States," and that was Franklin Roosevelt. My impulse is to say that he alone was not an actor, but I probably think that because he was such a good one. He could not stand on his legs, after all, but he took care never to exhibit weakness by appearing in his wheelchair, or in any mood but that of upbeat, cheery optimism, which at times he certainly did not feel. Roosevelt was so genuine a star, his presence so overwhelming, that Republicans, consciously or not, have never stopped running against him for this whole half-century.

The mystery of the star performer can only leave the inquiring mind confused, resentful, or blank, something that, of course, has the greatest political importance. Many Republicans have blamed the press for the attention Bill Clinton continued to get even out of office. Again, what they don't understand is that what a star says, and even what he does, is incidental to people's interest in him. When the click of empathic association is made with a leader, logic has very little to do with it and virtue even less. Obviously, this is not very encouraging news for rational people who hope to uplift society by reasoned argument. But then, not many of us rational folk are immune to the star's ability to rule.

The presidency, in acting terms, is a heroic role. It is not one for comedians, sleek lover types, or second bananas. To be credible, the man who acts as president must hold in himself an element of potential danger. Something similar is required in a real star.

Like most people, I had never even heard of Marlon Brando the first time I saw him onstage not long after the end of World War II. The play was *Truckline Cafe*, a failed work by Maxwell Anderson that was soon to close, hardly a promising debut for an ambitious actor. The set is a shabby café on some country highway. It is after midnight, the place miserably lit and empty. There is a counter and a few booths with worn upholstery. A car is heard stopping outside. Presently, a young man wearing a worn-leather jacket and a cap strolls in, an exhausted-looking girl behind him.

He saunters down to center stage, looking around for a sign of life. For a long time he says absolutely nothing, just stands there in the sort of slouch you fall into after driving for hours. The moment lengthens as he tries to figure out what to do, his patience clearly thinning. Nothing has happened, he has hardly even moved, but watching him, the audience, myself included, is already spellbound. Another actor would simply have aroused impatience, but we are in Brando's power; we read him; his being is speaking to us even if we can't make out precisely what it is saying. It is something like an animal that has slipped from its cage. Is he dangerous? Friendly? Stupid? Intelligent? Without a word spoken, this actor has opened up in the audience a whole range of emotional possibilities, including, oddly enough, a little fear. Finally he calls out, "Anybody here?!" What a relief! He has not shot up the place. He has not thrown chairs around. All he wanted, apparently, was a sandwich.

I can't explain how Brando, wordlessly, did what he did, but he had found a way, no doubt instinctively, to master a paradox—he had implicitly threatened us and then given us pardon. Here was Napoleon, here was Caesar, here was Roosevelt. Brando had not asked the members of the audience merely to love him; that is only charm. He had made them wish that he would deign to love *them*. That is a star. That is power, no different in its essence than the power that can lead nations.

Onstage or in the White House, power changes everything, even how the aspirant looks after he wins. I remember running into Dustin Hoffman on a rainy New York street some years ago; he had only a month earlier played the part of the Lomans' pale and nervous next-door neighbor, Bernard, in a recording session with Lee Cobb of *Death of a Salesman*. Now as he approached, counting the cracks in the sidewalk, hatless, his wet hair dripping, a worn coat collar turned up, I prepared to greet him, thinking that with his bad skin, hawkish nose, and adenoidal voice some brave friend really ought to tell him to go into another line of work. As compassionately as possible I asked what he was doing now, and with a rather apologetic sigh he said, after several sniffles, "Well, they want me for a movie." "Oh?" I felt relieved that he was not about to collapse in front of me in a fit of depression. "What's the movie?"

"It's called *The Graduate*," he said.

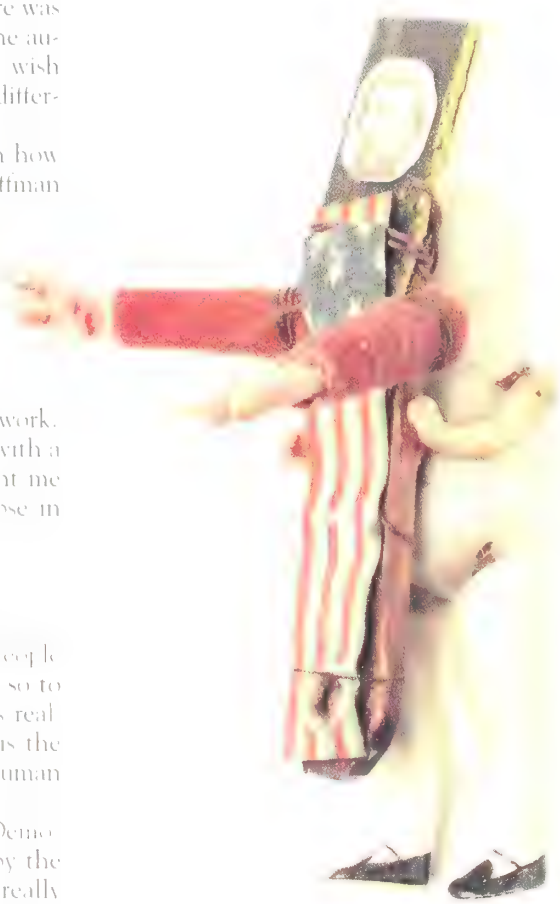
"Good part?"

"Well, yeah, I guess it's the lead."

In no time at all this half-drowned puppy would have millions of people at his feet all over the world. And once having ascended to power, so to speak, it became hard even for me to remember him when he was real. Not that he wasn't real, just that he was real plus. And the plus is the mystery of the patina, the glow that power paints on the elected human being.

The amount of acting required of both President Bush and the Democrats is awesome now, given the fractured election and donation by the Supreme Court. Practically no participant in the whole process can really say out loud what is in his heart. They are all facing an ice-cold shower with a gun to their head. Bush has to act as though he were elected, the Supreme Court has to act as though it were the Supreme Court, Gore has to act as though he is practically overjoyed at his own defeat, and so on. Unfortunately, such roles generally require hard work ahead of time, and the closest thing I've seen so far to deliberately rehearsed passion was the organized mob of Republicans banging threateningly on the door of a Florida vote-counting office and howling for the officials inside to stop counting. I must confess, though, that as a playwright I would be flummoxed as to how to make plausible on the stage an organized stampede of partisans yelling to stop the count and in the same breath accusing the other side of trying to steal the election. I can't imagine an audience taking this for anything but a satirical farce.

BRANDO HAD IMPLICITLY THREATENED US AND THEN GIVEN US PARDON. HERE WAS NAPOLEON, HERE WAS ROOSEVELT



WHAT CLINTON PROJECTS IS A PERSONAL INTEREST IN THE CUSTOMER THAT COMES ACROSS AS A SORT OF LOVE

An election, not unlike a classic play, has a certain strict form that requires us to pass through certain ordained steps toward a logical conclusion. When, instead, the form dissolves and chaos reigns, the audience is left feeling cheated and even mocked. After this last, most hallucinatory of elections, it was said that in the end the system worked, when clearly it hadn't at all. And one of the signs that it had collapsed popped up even before the decision was finally made in Bush's favor; it was when Dick Armey, the Republican majority leader in the House of Representatives, declared that he would simply not attend the inauguration if Gore were elected, despite immemorial custom and his clear obligation to do so. In short, Armey had reached the limits of his actor's imagination and could only collapse into playing himself. You cannot have a major performer deciding, in the middle of a play, to leave the scene without utterly destroying the whole illusion. For the system to be said to have worked, no one is allowed to stop acting.

The play without a character we can really root for is in trouble. Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* is an example. It is not often produced, powerful though it is as playwriting and poetry, no doubt because, as a totally honest picture of ambition in a frightening human being, the closest the play ever gets to love is Coriolanus' subservience to his mother. In short, it is a truthful play without sentimentality, and truthfulness, I'm afraid, doesn't sell a whole lot of tickets or draw votes. Which inevitably brings me again to Clinton. Until the revulsion brought on by the pardon scandal, he was leaving office with the highest rating for performance and the lowest for personal character. People had prospered under his leadership, and, with whatever reluctance, they still connected with his humanity as they glimpsed it, ironically enough, through his sins. We are back, I think, to the mystery of the star. Clinton, except for those few minutes when lying about Monica Lewinsky, was relaxed on camera in a way any actor would envy. And relaxation is the soul of the art, because it arouses receptivity rather than defensiveness in an audience.

That receptivity brings to mind a friend of mine who, many years ago, won the prize for selling more Electrolux vacuum cleaners in the Bronx than any other door-to-door salesman. He once explained how he did it: "You want them to start saying yes. So you ask questions that they can't say no to. Is this 1350 Jerome Avenue? Yes. Is your name Smith? Yes. Do you have carpets? Yes. A vacuum cleaner? Yes. Once you've got them on a yes roll, a kind of psychological fusion takes place. You're both on the same side. It's almost like some kind of love, and they feel it's impolite for them to say no, and in no time you're in the house unpacking the machine." What Clinton projects is a personal interest in the customer that comes across as a sort of love. There can be no doubt that, like all great performers, he loves to act, he is most alive when he's on. His love of acting may be his most authentic emotion, the realest thing about him, and, as with Reagan, there is no dividing line between his performance and himself—he is his performance. There is no greater contrast than with Gore or Bush, both of whom projected a kind of embarrassment at having to perform, an underlying tension between themselves and the role, and tension, needless to say, shuts down love on the platform no less than it does in bed.

On every side there is a certain amount of lamenting about the reluctance of Americans to condemn Bill Clinton, but rather than blaming our failed moral judgment I think we would do better to examine his acting. Clinton is our Eulenspiegel, the mythical arch prankster of fourteenth-century Germany who was a sort of mischievous and lovable folk spirit, half child, half man. Eulenspiegel challenged society with his enviable guile and a charm so irresistible that he could blurt out embarrassing

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AN AMERICAN LEADER MAY DELIVER THE SUNDAY LESSON PROVIDED HIS SWORD IS NEVER OUT OF REACH

truths about the powerful on behalf of the ordinary man. His closest American equivalent is Brer Rabbit, who ravishes people's vegetable gardens and, just when he seems to be cornered, charmingly distracts his pursuer with some outrageously engaging story while edging closer and closer to a hole down which he escapes. Appropriately enough, the word "Eulenspiegel" is a sort of German joke: it means a mirror put before an owl, and since an owl is blind in daylight it cannot see its own reflection. As bright and happy and hilariously unpredictable as Eulenspiegel is, he cannot see himself, and so, among other things, he is dangerous.

In other words, a star. Indeed, the perfect model of both star and political leader is that smiling and implicitly dangerous man who likes you.

In part because Gore and Bush were not threatening, their offer of protective affection was not considered important. Gore was so busy trying to unbend that he forfeited whatever menace he may have had. Bush did his best to pump up his chest and toughly turn down the corners of his mouth, but it was all too obviously a performance, and for too long his opponents failed to take him as anything more than the potential president of a fraternity. Risking immodesty, to say the least, he actually referred to himself as a "leader" and claimed that his forthcoming administration would fill the vacuum of "leadership." Caught time after time fouling up his syntax, thus shaking the image of manly command, he has improved since real power has descended upon him, and his sentences, saving on grammar, have gotten shorter and shorter—to the point where, at times, he comes close to sounding like a gunslinger in a Clint Eastwood film. He is, though, beginning to relax into his role and, like most presidents, may in the fullness of time come to seem inevitable.



The ultimate foundation of political power, of course, has never changed: it is the leader's willingness to resort to violence should the need arise. Adlai Stevenson may have seemed too civilized to resort to violence without a crippling hesitation, and Jimmy Carter was so clearly restrained by Christian scruple that a single military accident involving a handful of unfortunate soldiers destroyed all his credibility in one stroke. An American leader may deliver the Sunday lesson provided his sword is never out of reach, the two best examples being FDR and John Kennedy. But this type, which doesn't come along every day, is the aristocratic populist, and the aristocrat learns how to act at a very early age; it is part of his upbringing. A Nixon, on the contrary, has to learn as he goes along. Indeed, once he had ordered himself bugged, Nixon was acting during all his waking hours; his entire working life became a recorded performance.

The case of President Truman and the atom bomb is particularly rich in its references to acting and power. When several of the scientists who had built the first bomb petitioned Truman to stage a demonstration off the Japanese coast rather than dropping it on an inhabited city, he chose the latter course; the fear was that the first bomb might fail to work, encouraging the Japanese to refuse peace overtures even more resolutely. However frightful the consequences, it was better to bomb a city and in one flash bring the war to an end. The weakness in this reasoning is that if the bomb was so uncertain to explode, why drop it on a city, where Japanese scientists might examine and maybe even copy it? A more persuasive argument, I'm afraid, is that if the Japanese had been warned to expect a

demonstration of a terrible new weapon, and it had been a dud, a dead ton ball splashing into the sea, Truman's unwillingness to kill would have threatened his leadership, and he, personally and symbolically, would have lost credibility. I'm not at all sure what I would have done in his position, confronted with the possibility of terrible American losses in a land invasion of Japan. But the issue is not Truman so much as the manifestations of power that people require their leaders to act out. Jesus Christ could not have beaten Hitler's Germany or Imperial Japan into surrender. And it is not impossible that our main reason for cloaking our leaders with a certain magical, extra-human, theatrical aura is to help disguise one of the basic conditions of their employment—namely, a readiness to kill for us.

Whether for good or for evil, it is sadly inevitable that all political leadership requires the artifices of theatrical illusion. In the politics of a democracy the shortest distance between two points is often a crooked line. While Roosevelt was stoutly repeating his determination to keep America out of any foreign war, he was taking steps toward belligerency in order to save England and prevent a Nazi victory. In effect, mankind is in debt to his lies. So from the tragic necessity of dissimulation there seems to be no escape. Except, of course, to tell people the truth, something that doesn't require acting but may damage one's own party and, in certain circumstances, the human enterprise itself. Then what?

Then, I'm afraid, we can only turn to the release of art, to the other theater, the theater-theater, where you can tell the truth without killing anybody and may even illuminate the awesomely durable dilemma of how to lead without lying too much. The release of art will not forge a cannon or pave a street, but it may remind us again and again of the corruptive essence of power, its tendency to enhance itself at the expense of humanity. The late director and critic Harold Clurman called theater "lies like truth." Theater does indeed lie, fabricating everything from the storm's roar to the lark's song, from the actor's laughter to his nightly flood of tears. And the actor lies; but with all the spontaneity that careful calculation can lend him, he may construct a vision of some important truth about the human condition that opens us to a new understanding of ourselves. In the end, we call a work of art trivial when it illuminates little beyond its own devices, and the same goes for political leaders who bespeak some narrow interest rather than those of the national or universal good. The fault is not in the use of the theatrical arts but in their purpose.

Paradox is the name of the game where acting as an art is concerned. It is a rare, hardheaded politician who is at home with any of the arts these days; most often the artist is considered suspect, a nuisance, a threat to morality, or a fraud. At the same time, one of the most lucrative American exports, after airplanes, is art—namely, music and films. But art has always been the revenge of the human spirit upon the shortsighted. Consider the sublime achievements of Greece, the necrophilic grandeur of the Egyptians, the glory of the Romans, the awesome power of the Assyrians, the rise and fall of the Jews and their incomprehensible survival, and what are we left with but a handful of plays, essays, carved stones, and some strokes of paint on paper or the rock cave wall—in a word, art? The ironies abound. Artists are not particularly famous for their steady habits, the acceptability of their opinions, or their conformity with societal mores, but whatever is not turned into art disappears forever. It is very strange when you think about it, except for one thing that is not strange but quite logical: however dull or morally delinquent an artist may be, in his moment of creation, when his work pierces the truth, he cannot dissimulate, he cannot fake it. Tolstoy once remarked that what we look for in a work of art is the revelation of the artist's soul, a glimpse of God. You can't act that. ■

IN THE END WE CALL A WORK OF ART TRIVIAL WHEN IT ILLUMINATES LITTLE BEYOND ITS OWN DEVICES. THE SAME GOES FOR OUR LEADERS

TODAY




TOMORROW
The other 10%
TOYOTA
In 1997, Toyota was the first car company in the world to mass-produce a hybrid vehicle. By combining gasoline and electric power, the Prius reduces smog-forming emissions, cuts gas consumption in half, and, in short, has revolutionized the way cars affect our environment.
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The next step? A hydrogen fuel cell vehicle whose only emission is pure water. And beyond that, who knows. But
in the future, they won't be
They'll be the result of
90% perspiration. And 10% inspiration.

THE THINGS WE CARRY

Seeking appraisal at the *Antiques Roadshow*

By Joshua Wolf Shenk

As I remember him, Rabbi Sidney Wolf was short and thin. My grandfather had wispy white hair and wore rimless glasses. He grew orchids in his greenhouse and listened to classical records in a deep leather chair. He liked to tell stories, but I remember only one of them, about how when he was a kid he could buy two ice-cream cones or two candy bars for a nickel.

I am told he held his synagogue rapt with his stories. I am told men would appear at his home, remove their hats with trembling hands, and go with him to his study. I am told he ate salami sandwiches on Yom Kippur in his temple study. Sometimes, I am told, he did not get out of bed. I think he would have understood me. He died when I was twelve. He has always seemed to me like a ghost.

Some years ago, I had an idea that I would make him real. I went to Corpus Christi, Texas, and spoke to his old congregants in their condominiums perched above the Gulf of Mexico. I talked to old rabbis who taught him and a young one who had been taught by him. As I rose to leave, this rabbi pointed across his office to a Remington-Rand manual typewriter. "That was your grandfather's," he said. I walked to it, pressed my palm against its gray speckled paint, rubbed the ribbon between my fingers. I touched the black keys with metal rings and white inlay. As I pressed down gingerly, the typebars rose from their beds and fell again when I withdrew. Only then did I notice that the carriage read Hebrew.

Now I have this old, real thing. It is no ghost, [illegible] connect and release. The great claps come like hammer strikes, thunderbolts, heart attacks. They make the sound of life and death, then leave me again in tension and in silence.

In my apartment, as in my imagination, Rabbi Wolf's typewriter commands a place of honor. It sits now next to my desk, its open top covered by a small silk handkerchief. I never use it—the ribbon is dry, the platen so hard that it could crack the type. But even if I replaced the ribbon and platen, and oiled the gears, I could still only play at the typewriter as a toddler might a piano, for I know Hebrew about as well as a young child knows scales. This typewriter, built to make meaning through language, now sits idle and stares. If it were a book, it would peer from behind glass, taunting eyes with its story. If it were a carpet, it would hang from a wall, tempting feet with its fibers. "Maggie can't appreciate these quilts!" gasps a character in Alice Walker's story "Everyday Use." "She'd probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use." No, not these things. These old things we protect and display. We gaze upon them and show them to guests.

"Do you know," they might ask, "what it's worth?"

Now I do. Three times in the last year, I removed the typewriter from its shelf, wrapped it in towels, placed it in a small black suitcase, and went to find out what it's worth.

I did this for you too. Have you seen the collectors, the fondlers, the appraisers, with their fine objects, their old shit, their fine old shit? Have you noticed that there are 10,000 more antiques and collectibles shops than there were ten years ago? Have you watched eBay's numbers? In 1999 there were 10 million registered users and $2.8 billion in trades; in 2000 there were 22 million registered users and $5.4 billion in trades.

Imagine the object that is most special to you with a price tag dangling from it and a hand drawing near with an uncapped pen. Your heirlooms

Joshua Wolf Shenk's last article for Harper's Magazine, *"America's Altered States," appeared in the May 1999 issue.*

and curios—your old catcher's mitt or telescope, your great-aunt's sampler, that silver bracelet made by your grandfather, the one you never take off (you know who you are)—you may still regard these as "priceless" or "worthless." You may say you do not care about their price. Once you could be safe in this innocence. Soon, however, there will be no priceless, and no worthless, and it will take a great act of will to not care.

Another reservoir of human life has been injected with the green dye of the market. These are lush pools, glowing with desire, slippery with fear. Sometime, I predict, you will dive.

If you're curious, look what happened to me.

In the house I grew up in, a blue plastic mat covered our bathtub. It had dozens of suction cups on the bottom that, when lifted from the porcelain, told their own peculiar story. A few years ago I visited home and found the tub bare. My mom had thrown the mat away. It was old and soiled, she said. She seemed bewildered that I could be so angry.

For as long as I can remember, I have had faith in old things. I have brethren in this faith, and we have our own television show. On the *Antiques Roadshow* two men stand before an 1853 map of the United States. One says he bought it for two dollars at a library sale. Then the other tells stories about it—about pioneers and immigrants, in land offices and taverns, looking for the routes that peeled off the Oregon Trail, or checking the Negro population, free and slave, of Missouri. This data had to be accurate, the storyteller said, because the maps were *used* by people. And because they were used, pawed over, weathered, and stained, few survive in such good condition.

"Now you paid two dollars for it," he says. (*Why is the storyteller talking about money?*) "I assume you think it's worth more. Do you have an idea of what it's worth?"

"No idea whatsoever." (*This can't be true. Why did you buy it? Why do you like it?*)

"Well," says the appraiser, "a map like this, with such beautiful color and really remarkably good condition for this kind of thing . . . I would say a map like this would sell for between twelve and fifteen hundred dollars." A treasure chest, announced by the sound of pixie dust, passes across the bottom of the screen, leaving in its wake the words "1850s map, $1,200–$1,500." The segment ends and another begins. "Tell me where you got this," says the storyteller-appraiser to the owner, and again out pour miracles of material history.

Objects, with the *Antiques Roadshow* experts as their mediums, are made to breathe and speak. They become portals to the people who made, used, or owned them. The storytellers, before they appraise, read with astonishing depth. They can tell that a porcelain doll that passed through a family for generations was made in Germany sometime between 1840 and 1860. They can tell this from the flat-heel shoes. They can tell that a chair bought in Toronto was made in New York before the American Revolution and probably went to Canada with a Tory family fleeing the rebellion. If something has been in your family "forever," they can tell you just how long.

But the sugar in this oatmeal, the opium in this tea—the sweet and addictive quality of the *Antiques Roadshow*—is the transition from story to price. The segments begin with the particular, the idiosyncratic, and the obscure but within minutes yield to the impersonal, the immediate.



Whatever tension and wonder have been evoked by the distance of those pioneers and immigrants collapse into a number, a precise point on the map of everything that is possible, a tag instructing how lost time, people, or feelings can be owned. The burden of history floats away, to be replaced by treasure chests.

Watching this, I thought of my Grandma Shenk, my dad's mother—the Wolfs are my

[illegible] house in Florida. My uncle had just returned from a trip, and he had brought her a box of chocolate truffles. He told her that they were the most expensive chocolates in the world. I watched as she took them, beaming, and began to circulate among her guests with the box, offering pieces and repeating to each person, "These are the most expensive chocolates in the world." When she came to me I took a piece, and then I looked at my uncle. He shrugged. "I actually don't know they're the *most* expensive."

"Money is the absolute means," writes Georg Simmel in *The Philosophy of Money*, "that, on that very account, acquires the psychological significance of an absolute goal." In other words, people who exchange money for food, shelter, medicine, power [illegible] in our age, the list has no



[illegible] WORK WELL PRODUCE WEALTH AND THAT

real end—often imbue the currency itself with the qualities of what it can purchase. And so it is that words such as "most expensive" can make a grown woman beam.

My paternal grandmother is the child of Jews who fled Minsk for their lives. She grew up poor in Columbus, Ohio, where she met and married my grandfather, who grew up even poorer. His parents had also fled Minsk, and settled in Toledo. His father died young, and his mother later took her own life. My grandfather told his younger brother and sisters that they should never speak of what happened. He took them to Columbus, where he worked for his uncle in a junkyard. He began to sell rebuilt carburetors. With his wife, he built a small house and then a larger one. He did business, and she made home, cooking the sweet, fatty foods of their ancestors. He went bankrupt, started over—first with auto parts and then with whatever else he could sell for more than he paid. They did well and eventually retired to Florida, where they took their grandchildren to eat stone crabs for dinner, and pointed to the larger houses, and told them how much the people who lived there were worth. They suffered for this life, and if later their youngest son chips off a piece of the sweet, fat life and gives it to her in a box, will you sneer at her, will you cry for her, will you stand in awe at this moment?

This is an essentially American moment, as it has to do with the essential American faith: that the material world will provide, that hard work will produce wealth, and that wealth will correspond to happiness. I remember learning in grade school that Thomas Jefferson died penniless and being jarred by this fact as I would by a minor chord that did not resolve in a tonic. The grandchild of a salesman, I was raised to believe that great stories should resolve in great fortune, that true value should be recognized and rewarded with dollars.

I grew to question this belief. I grew to sneer and toss my horns at "the market" and the cruelties done in its name, at the way people and things become commodities. Before the Industrial Revolution, for instance, people had *relationships* to their land. Then land became "real estate"—the word "real" used in its legal sense of "pertaining to property" and in its mathematical sense of "pertaining to quantities." This idea of "real" can smother the other—that which is authentic, genuine. Today, price tags hang on human eggs, on pain and suffering, on spiritual practice. "What price liberty?" Sotheby's asked when auctioning a copy of the Declaration of Independence. (The answer: $8.14 million.) Some companies even hang price tags on their customers' lives (assigning "lifetime value" to their projected purchases, minus projected marketing costs). In such a world, The Market has become a kind of divine force—determining all that is real.[1]

The grandchild of a rabbi, I believe there is a

[illegible] *Hunter S. Thompson excitedly to look at the business pages, through which friends told him he could learn about "the real world." "Expecting a terra incognita," he writes, "I found myself instead in the land of déjà vu. The lexicon of* The Wall Street Journal *and the business sections of* Time *and* Newsweek *turned out to bear a striking resemblance to Genesis, the Epistle to the Romans, and Saint Au[illegible] City of God. Market values [illegible] high priests like Alan Greenspan, were mainly evidence of inadequate faith. The God in this theology is The Market itself, which once competed with other centers of value and meaning but in the past two centuries has risen to become "First Cause"—not a god like Zeus, who has to contend with competing deities, but rather like the Yahweh of the Hebrew Bible, "the only true God, whose reign must now be universally accepted and who allows for no rivals."*

alue more enduring, and also more elusive, han that which can be stamped with digits. I m caught in the thicket between two belief systems—the belief in *things* that can be ouched and counted and passed among us (and given a price that corresponds to the de- re for them) and the belief in *feelings* that can e evoked by those things but not counted, ransferred, or even, finally, represented.

Upon first glance, the *Antiques Roadshow* romises to resolve this inexorable tension. The how pays homage to memory and ancestry—to he felt, sacred ties that bind us. It seems to teth- r these spiritual values to the material world, hrough the magic of old things. During a show ilmed in San Francisco, an old man brought the eer mug in which his grandmother kept her tring. He learned that the mug was a rare piece rom 1880 worth up to $4,000. "Oh, go on," he aid, and then tears broke from his eyes and his oice choked. "Oh, I don't believe it," he said. "Yes," the appraiser said, "you have a real, real reasure here." "Two to four thousand?" the man ask ed, his voice cracking and hard to hear. Watching this, I felt that he had been afforded a small, precious vision of his grandmother's hands tossing string into that mug, of her lasting value.

To the same show, in San Francisco, Carole Gray brought a book that had been given to her great-grandfather by the French government. As California's first secretary of agriculture, he devised a way to control foot-and-mouth disease and later helped the French with their own outbreak. They thanked him with a thick volume that detailed the Empress Josephine's gardens, one of about a hundred printed, lavishly illustrated with signed lithograph plates by Pierre Joseph Redouté. "Do you have any opinion as to what this book might be worth?" Jerry Patterson of William Doyle Galleries asked Gray. "Have you ever been told?" And then he told her: $75,000.

I called Gray to ask her what had happened after the appraisal. Her first thought, she told me, was that she would need to get the book insured. This is a common reaction among viewers at home—who believe their heirloom is "just like" what is on screen—and insurance is now a necessity for most everyone who is taped at the *Chubb's Antiques Roadshow*. Although PBS custom doesn't allow the name for broadcast, the taping events are named for the show's principal sponsor, the Chubb Group of Insurance Companies. (Oh, the hated insurance men, who can "value" anything. We believe no one can tell us what true value is. Then we cup our ears to hear.)

Carole Gray earns a good living as an attorney in Marin County. The book was the one thing she requested from her grandmother's estate. Even though everyone in the family referred to it as "the damn book," she loved it for the simple reason that it had meant so much to her grandma. She can't imagine selling it, she told me. But, I asked, has your view of it changed, now that you know the price? "Not at all," she said. "I already knew in my mind that it was a valuable thing." Then, after a pause, she added, "It does fill me with a lot more pride now. At that time, it was a very nice gift and worth something, and now it's worth much more, so that's in correlation with the work my great-grandfather did." I tried to ask Gray just what she meant by "valuable" and "worth." Did she mean intrinsic or external worth? Moral or market value? I soon gave up in a fit of verbal exhaustion. These distinctions I could not articulate. They had, for practical purposes, been erased. And so I could not ask the crucial question: What is value?

At a certain point in my life, I came to believe that Rabbi Sidney Wolf could answer this question. When I struggled with what to believe and what to do, an image would swim into view of him with a mischievous and knowing look. Only he could explain all this, I thought. Eternally absent, his authority would be eternal as well.

I was eleven when I last saw him. He must have known that by the time I turned thirteen his cancer would have finished its work, and so we spent several afternoons in his study preparing for my bar mitzvah. I remember his voice. Rich and raspy, cured by cigars, it conveyed a blend of wisdom and compassion. I felt assured by the timbre, and I remember being surprised by this feeling because I mostly thought of him as an awful grump. He seemed angry a lot, maybe because arthritis had long since reached his fingers and he could no longer play the piano. The only time I saw him sit at the stool, he pounded out a few notes and then rose in disgust. Of what he told me in his study, what stories, what wisdom, what compassion, I can remember no trace.

In 1994 a Texas newspaper published a long feature on my grandfather. The writer, Hollace Ava Weiner, told a story about a small-town rabbi and his small town. Rabbi Wolf came to Corpus Christi, Texas, in 1932, accepting an offer of a three-month trial from a group of Jews who were far from sure they could sustain a congregation. "The work here," one of the group wrote him, "would be in the nature of a pioneer." My grandfather sent his response by Western Union: HAPPY TO ACCEPT YOUR OFFER WILL ARRIVE ABOUT TWENTIETH. For four years, a shack served as their synagogue. But, in the midst of the Depression, this Gulf Coast town had oil fields and a naval air station. Jewish immigrants, out of work in Chicago and Indianapolis, headed south, and the congregation grew.

Having grown up Orthodox, my grandfather chose the Reform rabbinate, he wrote in a brief

community. "It seemed to me that the men were more community minded." The idea of community animated him. In 1935 he began a cross-faith Thanksgiving service that *Time* featured on a two-column page. In 1950, for Lincoln's Birthday, he invited a black preacher and choir to occupy his pulpit for a night, and accepted a reciprocal invitation. He spoke with passion on Micah, justice, and mercy, but also on the need for birth control (in 1947) and the error of the Vietnam War (in the mid-1960s). He said Kaddish at more than 150 funerals, often for rural folks without a rabbi, and married more than 200 couples, but he also chaired the Red Cross, began an orchestra, taught English to Mexican immigrants, and found jobs and doctors for the poor. He stayed with his temple until he retired in 1972, and he died in Corpus Christi eleven years later. "Rabbi Wolf's work was subtle," a man named Tony Bonilla told Weiner. "He was not out to make a name for himself as some kind of hero or community healer or compromiser. He just did it quietly. . . . Rabbi Wolf, by his quiet, moral leadership, did a lot to help Corpus Christi find its soul."

Weiner's work startled me, especially when I saw that she had pried stories and details from my grandmother, who had always resisted my requests for the same. Bertha Wolf, known by the nickname Bebe because she was the baby in a family of French émigrés, did not, she would say, like to dig in the past. When I went to Corpus Christi, having interested an editor in a piece about my grandfather, she put it this way: "It's a sore, honey, and you don't scratch a sore." My grandmother's refusal to narrate the past is the norm in my family. They don't want to wade through the pogroms and the poverty and the suicides. But I feel the weight of this history. I feel it in my temples. I see it in sickly yellow skies, hear it in flesh, and taste it when I'm alone.

I spent ten days in the house on Leming Street—the rabbi's house, now his widow's. Chameleons crawled on the white clapboard outside his old study. In the back yard lay a garish cement rectangle over which the greenhouse once rose. I went through every drawer, every closet, looking for letters and sermons and scrapbooks. "Take whatever you want, sweetheart," my grandmother would call out every once in a while. But what I needed, she couldn't give me.

As a reporter, I had good material. I had Sidney Wolf's own brief but carefully prepared memoir. I had his barely breathing professor from Hebrew Union College and a classmate, who had been with him in high school as well. I had living congregants and scrapbooks stuffed with stories from the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*. It's material Hollace Ava Weiner found a "Prophet in a New Frontier." But I only saw white space, blinding white space. For instance, after his retirement, Rabbi Wolf told the *Caller-Times* that he had bought a tape recorder and was dictating recollections for "a sort of autobiography." I found the machine, but the only sound of him was several seconds of "testing, testing." Also, I found letters to an HUC professor in which he proposed topics for a dissertation (first on the pastor's role in mental health, later on Judaism and social justice), then large gaps before he wrote again. I could find no sermons, only notecards for a few talks. "He didn't save this stuff," Helen Wilk, Temple Beth El's historian, told me. "His sermons or his letters—he didn't think they would have much value. He never really thought of himself as a remarkable man. To him, it was 'I did my job. I did what I thought was right. I followed my conscience.' To him, what was the big deal?"

My eyes were drawn to what could not be seen, a man who wanted more than he had, who tacked between abject humility and great, perhaps even grandiose, ambition. A man who thought himself worthy of a memoir, then wrote, "I omit many personal details in this document which would be of no interest to my readers," thought again about a longer autobiography, then stopped himself after "testing, testing." A man who, according to my grandmother, was offered a position at the Holy Blossom Temple in Toronto, one of the oldest and largest Reform synagogues in North America, but turned it down. "Big deal" was a favorite phrase. "Big deal," he would say, meaning what he did was not. On his deathbed, when the city declared "Rabbi Sidney Wolf Day," he wondered aloud why the big deal. When I talked about this with my mom, she told me, for the first time, that my grandfather had "spells" in which he stayed in bed for several days at a time. Bebe would send my mom to check on him, to bring him a tray with dinner. He would be unshaven, and the sight scared them. The Reverend Bob Tate would come over, go inside the bedroom for a talk, then leave. Eventually my grandfather would reappear, sit in his chair with his music, shaven and smiling.

When I left Corpus Christi, I went to see a rabbi who had served Temple Beth El after my grandfather retired. Rabbi Warren Stone has a congregation in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. At the end of our interview, as I rose to leave, he pointed across his office to the manual typewriter. "That was your grandfather's," he said as I drew near it, dazed, especially after I noticed the Hebrew type. Before I had the time or presence to covet it, Rabbi Stone said, "You should have it."

What does it mean, though, to "have" this typewriter? The object is a paradox that I cannot resolve. It is a link to a past I never knew. In a storm, I can picture my grandfather hunched over it, striking its keys. But I am touching an absence. The typewriter speaks of

y grandfather but is, for me, forever silent. It is potentially warm but perpetually cold.

Somehow my grief and anger at this distance dissolved over time, and I came to gaze upon the typewriter with a kind of glaze. When friends noticed it and said, "How cool," I said, "Look closer." Then, like me in Warren Stone's office, they noticed the Hebrew. "It was my grandfather's," I would say. "He was a rabbi." When I began to write about the *Antiques Roadshow*, I decided to use it in an experiment. I did not want to know its price. I knew I'd never sell it. But I did want to know when it was made, by whom, how rare it was. To receive these stories, I would accept the price. I wrapped the typewriter in several towels inside a small suitcase, put it in the trunk of a rental car, and drove to Providence, Rhode Island.

The show tapes on Saturday. The line to receive one of 6,500 free tickets typically begins the night before. In Providence, a couple from Washington, D.C., plunked their lawn chairs down at 3:30 P.M. They had seen people turned away at the Baltimore taping, they told me. By midnight, the line stretched around the block. Many had driven from Virginia and New Hampshire and Pennsylvania. Some had booked rooms at the Holiday Inn, but most stayed in line, and I stayed with them, hearing their stories, the tremble in their voices.

Around 7:00 A.M., the show's staff began handing out the tickets. When the doors opened an hour later, the crowd snaked through the lobby and then upstairs through a hall resembling an airplane hangar. They clutched boxes, dragged wagons behind them. After six- and ten-hour drives, and all night in line, they would wait three or four hours more for their turn at one of nineteen appraisers' tables. In an interview with *Fortune*, the show's publicist compared the scene to the pilgrims at Lourdes waiting to be touched by the anointed. "I was always struck by how hopeful people are that they're going to come away better than when they arrived," she said. "That they're going to get the Good News."

Few receive such transcendence. The appraisers—from Christie's, Sotheby's, and Skinner primarily but also from smaller auction houses and shops—are not in that business. They know about art and meaning and history, because that's what they sell. Their priestly order can be traced to mid-eighteenth-century England, one of the richest societies in history, the first to earn more from trade and industry than from agriculture. In that era, Jeremy Bentham coined the word "capitalist." Before this time, to dispose of used possessions via auction seemed a rather melancholy affair. But in these boom times, two Londoners named James Christie and Samuel Baker (the uncle of John Sotheby) began to auction art, manuscripts, furniture. When we hear the word "auction" now, we don't think of slaves but of Chippendale furniture and Vincent van Gogh.

In 1983, Al Taubman, an American magnate of shopping malls and A&W restaurant chains, bought Sotheby's and set out to mass-market the company's brand. Catalogues received a new gloss, and a wave of celebrity auctions ensued. The 1980s highlight, an Andy Warhol sale with $20,000 cookie jars, foreshadowed the blockbuster Jackie O sale of 1996. Christie's at first scoffed at the tactics, then followed. Taubman compared his new company to A&W. No one *needs* root beer, he said, nor does anyone need high-class castoffs. But people can be persuaded that these products will satisfy needs they do have.



This message that beauty, joy, rebellion, are available for purchase is not unique to auctions. It presses against our eyeballs and eardrums thousands of times a day. But, as Lucinda Williams might put it, there's something about what happens at an auction. It is not just that the stakes are so high, or that Melanie Griffith was at the display and the phone pit has Arnold Schwarzenegger on the line. Somehow, at auctions, desire and fear distill to a wondrous purity. If your pores are open and your eyes breathe in deeply, you can feel the collapsed energy of value, a perfect model of the market's atom, ready to explode.



MOST SOLDIERS HAVE BROUGHT WHAT THE APPRAISERS REFER TO, OFF CAMERA, AS JUNK

The sales begin with displays in which the material is laid out in high-ceilinged rooms designed to resemble museums. Catalogues note the fine points of provenance, historical context, and aesthetics. As a newcomer, a lover of history and of things, I attended a display for a "Space Exploration" sale at Christie's East on Sixty-seventh Street in Manhattan and immediately slipped into a state of wonder. Here was a shingle from the Mercury-Atlas 5, a flight plan that went to the moon, a space suit nametag reading "N. ARMSTRONG." These things were behind glass, mounted on pedestals, flattered by perfect light. I met the expert coordinating the sale, Richard Austin, and asked him which object was his favorite. He took me to a Russian dummy, strapped into a test pod, wearing the world's first space suit designed for orbit. "Now this piece . . . ," he said, and I lost the rest of the sentence, because my eye was fixed on his hand, which he had slapped casually onto the dummy's knee. Museums train us to resist that impulse. This sense of transgression lent his slap a shocking charge. A moment of ownership, I thought, seeds the wish to own forever. The dummy and pod sold for $167,500.

A few weeks later, at the Sotheby's display for "Allen Ginsberg and Friends," having learned the rules, I took full advantage. I riffled through Ginsberg's letters and postcards, his books and Bob Dylan albums. I beckoned a Sotheby's staffer to unlock the glass box that contained his wallet. (The contents included an American Express card—"member since 1968"—a *Dartmouth Review* supporter's card, a stub from the Long Island Railroad, and two half-used Sweet'n Low packets.) The staffer pointed out his list of Salvation Army shops. "He carried this with him everywhere," she said. "He was a Buddhist, you know."

What's for sale here are not wallets or albums or letters but history and poetry and dharma. This is not just *a* chance to buy these qualities (as you have with, say, perfume). It is the *last* chance. You will not be one of many to own, say, the meditation mat that was daily warmed by Allen Ginsberg's ass. You will be the only one. Baby, only your ass will warm it now.

Perhaps Ginsberg does not turn you on. Perhaps you prefer Louis XVI. Or Rothko. Whoever you want to be, Sotheby's and Christie's want to draw you closer. (But act quickly. The Louvre has a man in the room, you know, and there is that strange collector who'll keep it locked up, out of view.)

Antiques announce what is missing—the world that created them, the person who used them. They are portals. The work of the "experts" at Christie's and Sotheby's is to convince us that we can pay to get through. They blend disinterested scholarship, personal enthusiasm, and ruthless commerce so smoothly that it is hard to tell where one ends and another begins. On the *Antiques Roadshow*, these experts seem to have access to a sacred, primordial value. But in fact they have access to a long accumulation of receipts and a good sense of the market. They know which type of collector can be drawn in and how much he might spend. *This* is the Good News that pilgrims seek: that objects from their past will, for some reason, coincide with the longings of the well-off or, better yet, the super-rich.

Such news is rare. Only about 60 visitors out of 6,500 are taped. Most have brought what the appraisers refer to, off camera, as junk. Many people bring family bibles, which are almost never valuable because they are almost always printed in great numbers. Many bring teddy bears that they hope are Steiffs, and machine-made furniture that they believe is old. One person, an appraiser told me, dumbfounded, waited in line all day to show him a toaster—a *recently made* toaster.

To the appraisers, the people in line are all Lomans to be endured, humored, because their naive bluster brings forth hidden treasures. Value is often inverted in a sharp curve. Scrimshaw, for instance, is art made of worthless whalebone—a testament to isolation and poverty. Now it is an object of romance: rare and valuable. The point of the *Antiques Roadshow* is to find *hidden* treasures,

o flush the stuff from trailers and subdivisions
hat belongs in mansions and museums. So the on-
r appraisals are as sweet as honey. The experts
here are curious, even solicitous. The light in
heir eyes, the affectionate stroke of hands across
ood grain—these are not the cold gestures of a
nker but the warmth of someone who knows,
nderstands, and cares. "Let us see what is special
you," they say.

Off air, switch follows bait. A thirty-something
an in jeans, with a pack of Marlboro Lights in
he pocket of his T-shirt, approaches with his col-
ection of records, carefully arranged in vinyl
owcases with black paper sleeves. The apprais-
g shuffles through them and, after about twenty
econds, says, "These are worth about two bucks
t the Salvation Army." Next in line. Later an old
an approaches the folk-art table and, with shak-
ng hands, extracts a piece in the shape of a whale
ooth from a maroon golf bag. A long day is near-
y over, and this appraiser is low on patience.
This is not old," he says, "and it is not
eal. You can buy it at any seaport novelty shop
or two or three dollars." He points to several
pieces of scrimshaw, which had excited him
nough to summon the producer. "Do you see
hese? *These* are old and real."

As the man shuffled away, I followed him to ask
ow he had been affected. Although he opened
is mouth and moved his lips, no words emerged.
After a few awkward minutes, his daughter came
and led him away. As with Carole Gray, I could
not ask him the real question, which is how he felt,
now, about intrinsic versus market worth. On the
television show, the collapse of these distinctions
has an alluring quality because all apparently live
happily ever after in the rubble. But at a taping,
you can see the negative of this image, the one in
which dumb smiles turn to dumb grief. After low
appraisals that ended far too soon, I saw shoulders
slump and brows sag. But then I heard clinical, de-
tached tones. "I just wanted to know more about
what I had," a man might lament after learning
that, say, his sword was not Civil War–era (not
even close!) and not worth thousands but "up to
a hundred dollars" ("up to"!). "I always wanted to
know about it," he would say, "and now I do."
And then he would point out that the appraiser
was really a gun expert and may have been mis-
taken, and may not have taken a close enough
look at the markings on the blade. And then he
would repeat, "But I just wanted to know what I
had, and now I do."

At the *Roadshow*, almost everyone I spoke to in-
sisted that they did not care about the price,
though they also spoke excitedly about possible
sums. Others trembled with anticipation but could
not explain why they had come. One woman
with unusually clear intentions, who had brought
the Disney books she read as a child, told me she
hoped they would be valuable so that her children
would keep them. I did not have the heart to ask
the obvious question: "Don't you wish they would
keep them just because they are yours?"

Even the "winners" on the show—those who
make it on air, tell and receive stories, discover sud-
den wealth—are not delivered. On television we
see only their whoops and blushes. Off the set, if
given the chance, they will worry out loud about
family squabbles, the cost of insurance, the threat
of theft. They exhibit the same "strange melan-
choly . . . in the midst of their abundance" that Toc-
queville noticed in 1831, the same strange melan-
choly of new billionaires in Silicon Valley
diagnosed with "Sudden Wealth Syndrome," or
lottery winners who descend into dysfunction.

The fantasy of the *Antiques Roadshow* is that we
can extinguish desire, eliminate tension, smother
need. A work of art that elicits desire for pos-
session, James Joyce believed, is pornography.
Echoing this idea, sociologist András Szántó calls
the *Antiques Roadshow* "value porn." "It consists
of a series of 'money shots,'" he says, "where the
tension of unresolved value is relieved again and
again and again."

Like sex without soul mistaken for "love-mak-
ing," value on this show is a ghost of the real
thing. In both economic and emotional terms,
value is established by the distance and obstacles
that separate a subject and its object, recalling Pla-
to's idea of *eros*, the state between having and not
having, possession and deprivation.

Just as we can't wake without having slept, find
without having lost, or feel the shock of something
that is always familiar, we can't act without forces
of resistance. To be a subject requires an object—
a word with its origins in the Latin *obicere*, mean-
ing "to hinder or oppose." What this means is
that value can be imagined but never confirmed.
Value is a lover's glance, which we must be re-
moved from to receive. Value happens after you
curl your fingers into a fist and swing, but just be-
fore the smack of bone, and then again just after
a release. Value is the sound of a manual type-
writer, when its keys strike and recede, connect
and release, strike and recede, connect
and release.

As I wandered the floor of the Rhode Island
Convention Center in my role as a reporter, I al-
so was hunting for an appraiser to show my type-
writer to. I met George Glastris around 4:00 P.M.,
an hour before the taping day ended. He has short
dark hair and quick brown eyes. He directs the Sci-
ence and Technology Department at Skinner, an
auction house in Boston. We had an instant rap-
port. "I've always loved history," he told me. "I al-
ways wanted to feel it. It's easier to understand how
a person lived when you sit in his chair." Glastris
collects phonograph players, and he says he wor-

ders about his old Edison machine, "Who owned this? Did their parents hate the music, or were they parents themselves? Did they listen to gut-bucket blues—'that colored music'—or the symphony?" His family, he told me, "doesn't have great roots," and few objects survive. The only story he knows "for sure" is that of his maternal grandmother, whom he would pump for information as a child. She told him the name of the ship her family took from Greece, and he hunted down its precise route and then the passenger log. "So I had the date," he said proudly.

I was sure Glastris would grant my request, but I stood watching him for a few minutes before asking. I had not slept, and I wanted to rest a bit before fetching the suitcase from the rental car. After a few minutes, a woman approached in loose-fitting jeans and plastic hoop earrings, and set a typewriter on Glastris's table. Glastris is the appraiser who had marveled to me about the brand-new toaster. Here was another marvel. "This is an early 1970s electric," he told the woman, apparently straining to be polite. He pointed to the nameplate and said, "It's an IBM. It's worth about thirty bucks."

My weariness may have facilitated a pure reaction. I felt a punch of humiliation. I may have flinched. I knew immediately that I would not show Glastris my typewriter. I had believed myself prepared to hear that the typewriter was worth very little money. I believed I didn't care. But I realized then that I had never for a moment doubted that Sidney Wolf's Remington-Rand would spark a gleam in the appraiser's eye. Through that woman, I felt how the bad news would feel. And I was silent.

I went home and after moping about for a while I heard about a man named Martin Tytell and his typewriter shop on Fulton Street in Manhattan. I called to see if he conducted appraisals. "Yes," he said, in a high, peppery voice. "But I'm eighty-six years old, so you should come soon."[3] Tytell had had his shop since 1935, housed since 1964 in a walk-up crammed with Underwoods, Remingtons, IBMs, and the type for 145 different languages. (The ñ's alone take up an entire shelf.) A short, rounded man, Tytell wore a white lab coat and a bright blue bow tie. When I showed him the typewriter, he said immediately, "This is *very* collectible," and he put on his glasses to take a closer look.

"It's gear-driven," he said, looking up after a few minutes—this gives the typebar momentum as it nears the paper—and it has a lever to increase or decrease the tension in the keys. Both were innovations on this model, Tytell said. He pointed out that the carriage moves left to right, so that the type will read right to left. I had never considered this. He looked up the serial number and told me it was made in 1934 in England, modified from an English-language model. It would have cost around $75. I quickly plugged the year into my grandfather's story—he must have bought it just as the temple decided to replace the shack, just when his life got solid. (Later I adjusted the cost for inflation. $930 in today's dollars, a fortune.) "How do you know where it was made?" I asked Tytell, and he pointed to the print on the back, "Made in Great Britain."

Then he told me about the demand for right-to-left typewriters around World War II, and about how typewriter factories switched to armaments, and how he came to modify typewriters for the War Production Board. "Typewriters saved my life," he said, because he was transferred from a division headed to the Pacific. "Fourteen hundred guys," he recalled, shaking his head. "Only two guys did not get slaughtered." He also told me how valuable manual typewriters are now. "You know the author, the guy who wrote the James Bond books" "Ian Fleming," called out Mrs. Tytell from the back room—and Mr. Tytell said, yes, Ian Fleming. Did I know that his machine sold for thousands and thousands of dollars in London? Tytell returned to his free associations for about thirty minutes, then to our task, for which I had agreed to pay him $50. "This machine is worth twenty-five hundred dollars," he said, "and that's what I believe it would bring at auction."

What happened next is that an impulse from my spinal cord dilated the blood vessels leading to my face: I blushed. Then an image swam into view of a group of curious, respectful, well-off men standing before the typewriter, soaking up the details of Sidney Wolf's life: How he grew up in Cleveland and attended Hebrew Union College. How he received a letter from Corpus Christi noting that "the work here would be in the nature of a pioneer." How he dedicated his life to the community, ending one talk with this quote from the Book of James: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and hath not works? Can faith save him?"

Before I left, Tytell urged me to have the typewriter repaired and provided me an estimate. This gave me pause. I liked him, but I also feared I could not give him the final word on the typewriter's value. My thoughts returned to George Glastris. I emailed him the model name, year, and a brief description, and told him Tytell's appraisal. He replied that the machine "has enough going for it to give it some value, but far less than this gentleman indicates." I packed it up for a final time and flew to Boston.

I found Glastris conducting free appraisals for walk-ins—as he does each Friday—in a room just off Skinner's lobby. I noticed, on the floor, a

[3] *Martin Tytell retired several months after this interview. Last February, his son Peter closed the typewriter shop.*

xful of toys, including a 1955 tin bus with the rds HOWDY MOOD[illegible] HOME and the faces of e show's characters painted in the windows. hen it worked, Glastris told me, it could be ound just by pressing it against the floor. The ar mechanism is broken, he said, but he would clude it in his next toy sale anyway.

"Now, your grandfather was a rabbi," Glastris id as I put the typewriter on his desk. "Was he influential rabbi." I had expected this question showed him a bulge of material—a book called *he Quiet Voices: Southern Rabbis and Black Civil ights, 1880s to 1990s*, for which Hollace Ava Weiner wrote a chapter on my grandfather; and pile of newspaper articles, including one from the *aller-Times* from just the week before that named idney Wolf one of the top "newsmakers" of the entury. Glastris looked over the material for a few inutes, nodded several times, and then said, "If is came in as a collectible typewriter, the value ould be minimal because it's a"—he raised two ngers on each hand—"'modern' typewriter." emington manufactured its first QWERTY ma- hine in 1874, he explained, introducing not on- the modern keyboard but also the basic look and el that we associate with typewriters. The ma- hine expanded the market and forced competi- ors to conceive alternate designs so as not to vi- olate Remington's patent. "They might have an ndex of letters on a strip," Glastris said, "and a ointer you'd move to the letter and push down. Or there would be a dial that you would turn to he letter you want." Typewriter collectors, he aid, want those kinds of machines. "The rule of humb with typewriters," Glastris said, "is that it t doesn't look like what you and I perceive as a ypewriter, it's worth money." Mine does look ike a typewriter. Also, Glastris said, Hebrew ma- hines (which also work for Yiddish) are not rare ews used them throughout Europe and the Unit- d States and, of course, in Israel.

"Now," Glastris went on, "if your grandfather had been Simon Wiesenthal, or the most famous abbi in America in the 1930s, or if he had writ- en an influential text, that would add to the va- ue. When I was at Christie's in London, we had an Fleming's Remington. It made fifty-five thou- sand pounds. Because it was *Ian Fleming's*! And he wrote the James Bond books on it! It could have been broken and it still would have made the money. But your grandfather is not well known outside of Corpus Christi, so in the great scheme of things he's not that important. He's an inter- esting character but not a major player."

At this moment, when a *Roadshow* appraisal would have owners salivating and viewers lean- ing forward, Glastris stopped. He preferred, I think, not to deliver the price. But I insisted, and he obliged. "If this were a standard Reming- ton portable," he said, "it would be fifty dollars. Because it's Judaica, maybe a collector would say it's interesting and he'd pay a hundred or a hun- dred fifty." "If I wanted to sell the machine," I asked, "would you put it in your catalogue?" As a favor to me, he would. But in most cases, he said, it wouldn't be worth his time. I thanked him and stood to go. I pointed to the broken *Homemovies* toy. "What are you going to ask for this?" I asked. "Oh, about two hundred," he said.

On the way home from Boston, I returned to an old text on the worthlessness of my grandfather, delivered to me six years ago by Rabbi Albert Goldstein, a retired rabbi from Brookline. Gold- stein was my grandfather's classmate at both high school and Hebrew Union College. "We were



not close acquaintances, not friends," he told me over the phone. "We did not stay in touch after graduation. See, he didn't publish anything. He didn't write. So he wouldn't have had a wider ac- quaintance than just the places that saw him and knew him up close. He apparently did all right. He went to Corpus Christi and served there all his life. His tenure was never in danger."

I took the barb of this condescension. "How did you get to Brookline?" I asked. He ticked off the congregations he had served: Cedar Rapids, Ko-

ed in. Value is not wha
we coax, toil, and scream for. Value is the coax
ing, toiling, screaming. Value is not relief but ten
sion. Not divine instruction but moral choice.

I recently went through my grandfather's ol
that I had no memory of having seen before. It
typed in all capitals on double-sided index card

We have a problem, the rabbi says, which is t
we must pursue goals whose earthly measures mus
be distrusted. How to measure success, for in
stance. It cannot be how much we sell, or what w
own, for then we sell ourselves and own nothing

"Let there be no misunderstanding," the rab
bi continues. "Money is important and the sham
is that so many people have so little of it. Two
thirds of the world lives in poverty because of
lack of money." But money, he says, "is good on
ly when it leads to what money cannot buy." I
wealth coincides with disaffection, and boredom
this is not wealth at all. "Is it any wonder," he aske
"that many young people do not want any part o
this way of life? What ought to strike us is tha
very often they can see right through us. The
want to be real. . . . They are saying to us, many
of them, that we have sold our birthright, ou
authentic selves, for a mess of pottage."

"Young people," the rabbi says, "need to be
taught how to become unimportant to the world
and how to be important in the quality of their
lives. . . . The world needs more unimportan
people of quality. Noah was a good man in his
generation. He was no Abraham or Isaiah. But
this simple, good man saved civilization by the
quality of his life. The ark he built did not house
the very important people of that day. It saved one
man and one woman and through them gave hu
mankind another chance. . . .

"The true religious life is not in bigness, it is not
in size. Elijah could not hear God's voice in the
earthquake or in the fire. He heard it in the still
small voice. God is most often found by those who
seek him in the simple quiet place where men do
not observe or take note. It is the hyssop that
God used to free the slaves, not the cedar o
Lebanon. The success which really matters lies in
the quality of life, just as the faith that matters is

The speech has an implicit paradox. A man
certain of the still, small voice—a man with a true
faith in unimportance—would not be raised on
a stage, speaking into a microphone. Rabbi Wolf
is wrestling with himself in this speech, just as I
have wrestled with his memory, and still do. I
wonder if this is what he would have told me
about value, had he had a chance to: that it is not
a thing but a process; not fixed but fluid; not the
gold pot but the rainbow; not words on a page but
the striking of keys; not a typewriter but what it

BLUE EYES, BROWN EYES

A *pocho* tours Mexico

By Dagoberto Gilb

Lots of times I was bored with TV before midnight, so I took the pliers to it—both the knobs were off because they'd broken, and although I could twist the metal shaft of the on-off and volume with my finger and thumb, it was easier pinching it with pliers. At night, the streetlight outside and not so many cars or motorcycles, I might suddenly get scared. Nothing specific to be afraid of, nothing except me and maybe being alone and being young. I didn't expect or even fear a thief or a murderer or a pervert crawling through a window to get me, but something animal, more or less, substantial enough, hiding somewhere, staring out from the dark. I couldn't calm myself until I went to every room and put light into the space. Looking behind the furniture. Under beds. I opened the closet doors and pushed things around. I'd have a knife in my right hand, a kitchen knife with a blade twice as long as my hand and almost as wide. Once I cleared the area, and my head, I did make sure the front and back doors were locked, and then I could go back to a red couch that was near the TV and I would be safe. That couch was scratchy where it wasn't worn smooth, but it didn't matter. My mom would be out on a date, and instead of the bed I'd be on the red couch with a blanket and pillow, and I'd stare up at the wavy grains in the wood ceiling and remember what I'd heard here or there, or what she said or what he said, or visualize or imagine what I'd do it and where I'd go when, and what I was doing there, and how I got here—the long route of it, what I did know and what I didn't. And there was always a girl. There was a particular girl I knew, though she was much older and she didn't know me. Sometimes it was she. In Archie comics, my favorite, she looked a little like Veronica. Except she was broker, and her makeup, at least, was right dresses. And she didn't come from the United States but from Mexico. Which is where my [illegible] was, to Nuevo Laredo and Piedras Negras and Mexico City, except maybe they came from Spain first. My lineage [illegible] all those places [illegible] was confused and blurred together.



I was born and raised [illegible] and I didn't know [illegible] Mexico than most: It was where the people who [illegible] construction workers were from, *la gente* who ironed and sewed and served food, who weren't afraid of the daylight sun or the nighttime dark. It was Trio Los Panchos and Vicki [illegible] the weekend, cooking, and [illegible] hair; it was a mom with [illegible]

Dagoberto Gilb is the author, most recently, of the story collection Woodcuts of Women [illegible]

reached the knees, clutching her ba[illegible] big silver belt buckle, blue jeans, and a western shirt with snap buttons, and reptile boots, and straw cowboy hat, looking both sweet and strong.

Mexico was a story to me, one [illegible] book: adventure, love, honor, pride, betrayal, *guero y moreno*. It was a bright poster in a Mexican restaurant up the street, from East L.A. to El Paso, and north and south and east and west of those: Bearded *conquistadores* in hot, heavy, mythical armor who sailed tall, wood-planked [illegible] *Indios* in linen thongs and leather sandals whose hairless chests pumped *pura vergüenza*, both cultural and racial. Slaves and *doncellas*. Magicians and seers. Gold and feathered headdresses traded for glass beads and shards. Hallucinogenic pyramids and misting volcanoes, hot wet blood and molten lava leaking from them like spit or semen. Cannonballs and spears and swords and shields. The first horses neighing and snorting, and the first big dogs, tongues panting. Emperors named Moctezuma and Cuauhtémoc, who ruled from an island city with roads and highways of water. Jungle. Heat. Rain. Eagles and cactuses and snakes. A sun who was God.

You have to scratch hard, almost unto a frown. Take a rasp to the [illegible] into the boot, hard onto the shovel of consciousness, and let it clink against those rocks of desert soil, and pile little and big scoops near the dry hole. In the European West, what [illegible] an id that is blood-soaked instinct and wild impulse, the machine of love and hate, which creates the juice that is genital hormone and pheromone, the party, good sex, danger, crime; and its polar opposite, a superego that is the finicky gourmet of civility and gilded culture, common decency and useful manners, guilt repressed and in tabloids, conscience and reason. But for us there's another suppressed, subconscious drama of duality—Cortés and Malinche, a man and a woman, the Spaniard and the Indian, miscegenous father and mother, the heated and on-the-side mixing; both cultures high and low, both cultures of shame and pride, both a sexual energy that is natural and unforgivable, both a result of dominance that is weak and wrong and submission that is strong and brave, and their reverse; and then there is the blood draining from a convulsing uterus and a stabbed or cutout heart, and the light skin and the dark skin, and the male and the female, a blue mind's eye and a brown mind's eye, both good, both bad.

Call it Veracruz, not Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, a humid port of foggy drizzle and coarse sand, the land above its shore as green as mold, as wet as mildew. The hotel has a stinky smell of cheap disinfectant blowing through its air-conditioning ducts. The woman beside me, a *conquistadora* of another sex and land and time, with the Castilian *bola en la boca*, doesn't like the odor. Does Mexico smell like this? Spain does not smell like this. There are too many suitcases and way too many expectations inside them. No, this is not Spain, I hear in my head, responding, sniffing, suddenly worried about the journey. Until finally in a room, higher up than in the original itinerary, red-tiled floors and a white-washed *terraza* at eye level to the bronze dome of the cathedral and the blanched municipal steeple, pigeons and the blue gulf on the horizon, black ships with long boom cranes and two tunnels through their guts. As night falls, there on the *zócalo*, the Plaza de Armas, near the yellow and red umbrellas alongside the row of restaurants that front it, where the marimbas range, it's *una noche de danzón*. Fanning themselves, so many are lined up to watch, and dance too, but the contestants are on the stage. A handsome *guera*, just a few pounds over her ideal figure, what she was in her late twenties but not now in her late thirties, is in her most beautiful red dress, a white fan, white shoes, a white sash around her waist, and a white flower in her beautiful dark brown hair. She sways, spins, steps, twirls with *el suave*, dark and handsome—he in a white *guayabera* and pants and shoes, a narrow-brimmed fedora hat, white too, tilted just right—and together they waltz, gentle, calm, sweet, as sensual and aroused as a long, middle-age love.

In the morning when you're sitting with *un café lechero*, as you wait to ping-ping your glass for more hot milk and hot coffee, because this isn't what you're here for, you will have to shake your head no and show disinterest in so many good people selling shirts, nuts, CDs and tapes, *flores*, dresses, watches, cheese, cigarettes, *relojes*, toy cars, wood sculptures, fans, more watches—no to the soft-talking men playing accordions and guitars, and no to the fast-talking women promising to tell your fortune—and lottery tickets, gum, wooden hairpins, and book marks, and snakes. Or *por la tarde* on the *malecón*, walking the coastal docks, there are primordial images from broken and confused dreams or memories—hefty *conchas* and *caracoles* that you can blow foghorn loud, rattlesnake belts and Indian sandals, *Vírgenes de Guadalupe* and *Jesucristos* in miniature altars of sand and shell that dangle electrical cords, glittery mermaids made out of blonde-haired Barbie dolls, turtles and gators and jaguars, sharks, seahorses, starfish, blowfish, squid. Smell the *vainilla* and *tamarindo* and milk and sugar candy and *puros* of tobacco from the mountains of San Andrés de Tuxtla, and eat juicy mango on a long skewer, cut in peels like an artichoke, and sliced coconut, skinned and chopped above a wheelbarrow of them, shaken up in a plastic bag *con limón y sal y chile*. Sit by a big fan, button pushed in on high, at La Michoacana for *aguas frescas* and *paletas*: *horchata, mango, melón, nancha, jamaica, naranja, piña, fresa, limón*, [illegible] *vainilla* flavors.

In nearby Boca del Río, at night, you choose to drink Corona or Sol or a *vodka tónico* while you're smoking forbidden Cuban cigars, those addictive Montecristos, and eat fresh grilled snapper. (Excuse me, but please take the head off so that eye isn't staring

ck. The waiter laughs: *A su servicio, señor*). The moonlight moistens the plumms and plastic chairs and bro- n benches around the little square at e center of town. Not far away, oby blue balloons are hooped as both reath and tunnel on a stage that will ing newlyweds to the tall, tiered ake. Families and friends, in a polite hispering, clutter the tables of the alt street, blocked off on this tranquil ight, not a sound in space except a arimba group another block down hey are beside the water, and, like a phony postcard, little boats bob in the lapping sea.

Shortly after Cortés first an- hored nearby, the rocky island here the Totonacas were living, cross from the Malecon, was named San Juan de Ulúa. Soon began its uildup into a thick-walled fortress o guard against pirates and foreign ti kers, and then after that it be- ame the home of the most infamous Spanish torture chambers known to man—echoing caves that took on names such as *el infierno*, where a man chained and bound would live in endless night in pitch black, driving him both blind and insane; or *la gloria*, where a shackled man could watch a needle of light (enough to cause simple insanity), where a set of humid prison cells dripped rainwater onto a prisoner's skull, mosquitoes and flies burning, malaria and maggots, rats biting his toes. It is here that Cortés first became known to the Aztecs, that the emissaries and messengers for Moctezuma boarded his ship to present gifts to him as Quetzalcoatl, that he shot cannons to show them, and them king, his ungodly powers.

But Cortés didn't get out of his ship onto Ulúa, did he? Or did he, like a man on that island told you as though it were as certain as he was, first stand in his armor where the Burger King is now? That's not the beach described or named in the history books: On 23 April 1519, on Viernes Santo (Good Friday, it is said that he landed on *la playa de Chalchihuecan*—the beach of *el Rio Color Esmeralda*. Not a historical site anybody you ask will know about or any guidebook will lead you to, and you'll have given up on finding where it was and might happen on it when you're driving, fast, north in a rented red VW bug, *sin dirección*, and there is an almost hidden sign (which is green) with the desired name, pointing east down an unpaved road. There is a *loncheria* right at the corner, tall logos above its straw roof: Superior, Bohemia, Coca-Cola. Hand-printed words outside its patio walls detail the cuisine—*coctéles, pescado y antojitos, caldo de camarón*—and sodas and bottled waters are lined up on a colorful plastic tablecloth, beer in a cooler that isn't cold. *El cacique* Pinotl, who was the one to welcome Cortés to his land, whose people accompanied him on the conquest of the Aztecs, is a dark, kind, and generous *mulo* in a V-neck T-shirt and cotton pants, and he embraces you and the *costalina* you're with as he did Cortés. He runs the stand with his wife, who rocks herself in her chair, knitting in the shade. A family beach, he says. Not so many people go there.

This is not like in the south of Spain, and no, she really does not want to go down to that shore. So much black stuff in it! It's a spacious cul-de-sac of beach, a lush arc around it of tall trees. You can see the wooden ships anchored off the shore, and then Cortés is rowed in, and he disembarks, and he will trade in that hot shining armor (though it's glaring brilliance in the sunlight is what made it so convincing that he was Quetzalcóatl) for the much cooler *manta* and *huaraches* of these Indians. The water is at low tide, and its high tide is marked by a thick, mucky belt of debris, of plastic, labels-washed-off, white and clear and green bottles, hollowed stalks and rusting cans. Close enough, she turns and, her hands holding her highlighted hair from tangling up too much in the wind, rushes back up to the tree line—no, she will not feel the Gulf water with her toes, and now the dirty sand is sticking between her pretty, red-nail-polished toes and Italian sandals—and over to the horse near the tree. Look at it: it is the first horse in the Americas. Full grown, it is small, and calmer than one in Texas. It carries a clean, Mexican saddle on its back, unadorned leather flaps and stirrup,

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seat and horn. She baby-talks the horse in English, petting his nose.

Many signs and guides lead you inland to Antigua, the oldest Spanish [illegible] power here, where Malinche was baptized as the first *americana* Christian, where Cortés made his, and their, first home. This must be the first Catholic [illegible] smallest, least intrusive crucified Christ [illegible] Guadalupe and her altars I rose. Its outside walls and bell tower seem curiously arabesque and not colonial—but why don't you want to take a picture of me ever? And I frame. Her architecture and its, both so physically beautiful, curvy and rounded, both competing to be the center of attention, both deserving it. The little children in white clothes and black hair ask for pesos, and you give them each two. A saddled *burro* droops on the sidewalk under the green shade beside the haggard Hotel [illegible]

Xalapa, where I was told my specific ancestors began, could be my home. A colonial town, capital of Veracruz state, surrounded by villages of Indian culture that is now called Mexican. It is a short ride from Veracruz city to Xalapa, past many lean-to markets that could be props for visual artists—the hanging vines of ripe *plátano* and grape, the stacks of mango and guava and coconut. Look at the one that is end-to-end giant pods of watermelon! Those white-mottled green wholes against the juicy red of those halved and wedged—colors of the Mexican flag. Only a few miles from the coast, you will feel the cool of Xalapa's mountains, you will see books new and used for sale on the streets—writers from every country, on every subject—and you will be able [illegible] hippie dance while shirtless young men beat handmade drums and cowbells outside a bank. Hear traffic air and the center of the city, the whistles of pot-bellied policemen signaling. Smell coffee being roasted and brewed, [illegible] in the fields in nearby [illegible] of Xalapa, steep as those in San Francisco, and the narrow sidewalks accommodate them with yards of cement poured so high beside the roads they're like balconies in front of the homes. Look at the intricate carving in the handsome, oversize wooden doors at almost every entrance, the light-stained and varnished excess of trim around windows. The color of Xalapa is corn yellow, and it takes a six-inch border of royal blue—you see it everywhere. As you walk, you will find these colors even on the clay pots and vases that the shy women are painting on their laps and on the ones just finished, drying on old newspaper on the table in front of them. Walking up and down these streets, if your muscles hurt later, buy and rub on *grasa de coyote*, Mexican Ben-Gay.

Just before noon, the prettiest lady, whose face reminds you of your mom's—a dark shorty who's a little heavy, but who cares?—in a white surgical cap and chef's apron arrives with straw baskets on the corner beside the hotel Mesón del Alférez. She sets up a table and opens an umbrella, and people crowd around her. Inside one basket are tacos, three for five pesos, or enchiladas, two pesos each. Tacos are not what you expect in the States. They are fried hard, closed up, different kinds of meat inside, and refried beans are spread on top of them and crumbled cheese and a hot sauce if you want (not too hot in Xalapa—even though this is where the word for the chile we call "jalapeño" comes from). She pulls out the enchiladas from a clear plastic bag that's inside a plastic grocery-store sack inside another straw basket. She peels the number of them ordered from a stuck-together lump and stacks them on strips of wax paper. These aren't fried as crispy as the tacos, and cheese can be rolled inside with the meat, and they are exactly what the word translates, "in chile," and so the tortillas are reddened. You eat both with your fingers, and they're not heated up in a microwave. It is a popular lunch spot, and a crowd layers around her, from important suits-and-ties with the government to taxi drivers with holes in their shoes, people who come to eat her food, and not only because of the cheap price.

So you're a *pocho*, right? she asks me in Spanish.

[illegible] *hamburguesa*. Half-taco, half-hamburger.

She laughs at me.

Es que viví en Tejas, I tell her.

Tejas, she repeats.

Pues sí, the land that they took, I say.

She smiles. And you are with *esa guapa gringa, verdad?* She raises her eyebrows and wiggles her eyes at me that way people do when they are pleased for you and teasing too, talking about the bad that is so good.

I nod, smiling back.

¿Por qué siempre tienen ojos azules? she wants me to tell her.

I never thought about the reason they always had blue eyes before, and I don't know how to answer the question.

As you're thinking about where you would want to live if you lived here, you're taking a bus ride, and you pass fields of corn, a muddy river, and cows, pigs, chickens, and roosters, pass mounds of dirt for brick or plaster, gravel, rock, stacks of cement blocks, stone, and tile, the men in their *sombreros de paja* and pants hanging low, dragging against the heels of their hard shoes, the women in their aproned housedresses that reach their calves, with their long black hair, washed in rainwater, woven into a braid, carrying *paraguas* that can be orange or blue or lavender. Stop to look inside the village of Coatepec's *mercado*. These people will jump away if you try to take a photo of them, even if instead you are only trying to take pictures of the high mound of red *tomates* against the aqua wall, or of the twenty or more sacks of dried chiles or *fideos* or beans or cereals or rice, candies, nuts, *hojas de palma, maguey, papaya, epazote, plátano*. A rainy dew begins to drip onto the landscape as the bus climbs, wipers swinging, up the road to the jungle and forest of Xico. There are dark, tall, and wide clouds when you arrive, ready to unload—but except above the forested volcano, where a surreal mist hangs close around its flat cap, like it both loves it and is afraid. Xico is the source of the romantic fantasy about the beauty of Mexico. It is the international

re types of the country village
f the thick Yucatán Maya
re and society that gets reproduced
the hands-on learning areas of
nerica's children's museums: cob-
d streets with
o tied from one side to the other,
oden balconies, decorative
rought iron, the bright paint and
ed roofs, men riding horses, wom-
patting tortillas, boys and girls
aying and riding simple bicycles,
epy dogs sprawled on the street,
ts sunning on windowsills, people
aning out their windows, watching
thing, always saying *buenas tardes*
hen you pass them.

She has come out of a clothing
ore, shaking her head. A small dark
n has stopped
he street, his eyes transfixed on her
xotic, voluptuous beauty—like a
athered, fertile, blue-eyed goddess
n that other land.

There is nothing her size, she says.
he has on those Italian leather san-
als and a skirt bought in Spain and
low-cut black top, and she is push-
g her highlighted hair back.

I say, this is Xico, you know.

I wanted a pair of pants.

But this is Xico.

You don't want to live here, do
ou?

It is a pretty town, I tease.

Or you're taking a crowded bus—
rilled tassels below the driver's
earview mirror, long as the wind-
hield
oung boy, a handsome eleven- or
welve-year-old, climbs on board
ith a guitar, his collarless white
hirt buttoned to the top so it's snug
n his neck, and he stands in the
isle and waits for the bus to start
noving, and he sings a *corrido* about
os americanos and the brave men
who fought against them at the bor-
er and got away, or a love song, a
nan full of love for his woman,
reaming only of sleeping in her
rms and the year that was a day. He
ngs with a passion and a resonance
hat is remarkable for the contrast-
ng dispassion in the faraway of his
ace, never looking anyone in the
ye, and, no applause, the gentle,
usinesslike sweetness that asks for
donations and only nods when one
f the few is accepted. Outside the
bus's windows there are bushes of gaudy pink bougainvillea, and birds of paradise whose blooms are such a brilliant red, with yellow tips, that they seem more like sacred Indian ornaments hung near the waxy, pale leaves. When you get off the bus, you will have to stop at the plaza in the center of town. Take a look at the long green pods—green beans pumped and buffed on steroids. Who has ever seen these before? What are they? *¡Son jmiculas!* I make them say it several times, listening. I've never heard of it. *Jmiculas*. The boys that have them for sale, piled on the sidewalk on plastic cloth, smile and laugh at you. The oldest one shows you how to crack a husk open at its seam. Inside are a dozen round, fuzzy, white seeds, like misshapen pearls, big as walnuts. The white around the seed is sugary and juicy. You spit out the hard seed once you've sucked the tender white off, and you throw down the empty pod when you're done—they are all over the center of
peaceful mountain streets, smelling oiled leather: boots in every store. You can walk and see maybe fifty *zapaterías*, more than half the town,
skins that are python, cow, bull, watersnake, eel, rattlesnake, and even stomach lining—what we call tripe. They are half as expensive as any boots you've ever bought, and better-looking and -made than most, and no sales hustle.

When you talk about homes, you talk to a young man on the bus ride away sitting on a metal bench beside yours across the metal aisle, a gentleman named Abelardo. His wife is
ghurt in the *centro* to people who
in the tied plastic bags and in two hard-plastic paint buckets. He is the proud owner of a *ranchito* with five cows. You will see it. There is the big tree in front. You know his is far from the *hacienda*, known now as the Museo de El Lencero, that was home for fourteen years to President Antonio López de Santa Anna. Sofas
English clocks, Japanese lanterns, Russian harp, native wood from Tlacotalpan, any kind of wood—mahogany, oak, cedar, cherry—or de-
eagles or into horse's hooves—in the beds and bureaus and chairs and tables. And every kind of precious metal—copper, gold, silver, and bronze. So many rooms, each too ex-
ways, the central patio, the tiled *terrazas*, the tasteful modesty of the
craving envy.

I
when Alberto, the smiling and so genial *gerente* of the restaurant you have eaten at more than once now, approaches you both yet again. He naively thinks you are rich. It is surely because you are with *la guapa gringa*. Her Spanish is so perfect, her looks so *italiana*! Oh yes, Spain must be an impressive country, he says, though, no, no, he has never had
sale! You should see the view! Oh
and water his plants and flowers
fectly for a young couple—he and his wife, Alma, they are not young, but their children—different mar-
manage a restaurant in Cozumel,
the house sells. There people appreciate the very richest food, Alberto says, especially seafood, which, unlike here, is so plentiful. And you know how the richest food costs, and there is never anything less than the finest preparations! He
manner of manners—taking this particular task away from our waiter, simply to honor and impress us.

How could a home cost $9,
leave for a moment.
envision a two-bed
hacienda

dessert crêpes with him, and the

the street that is a *privada* . . . Is that a

driver. He's an older man, his gray

there, he says dryly, which means it's

When we approach it, passing Xalapa's newest, most modern shopping mall, it looks that way: ranch-style houses, mansions, estates, maybe even *haciendas*. But we go on, making turns, crossing riverlike streams and pondlike puddles that take over after the asphalt has ended. Driving slowly, avoiding punctures from rocks on the narrow road. Asking this one walking if he might know where this particular *privada* is, and then asking that one walking with an open wooden box of tools. He

Alberto is angry with the taxi driver because we are late. Disgusted and ashamed of this lowly wage earner. It's easy to find, he snaps, shaking his head.

Pasen! he says, as we pass through a gate. It is a small house. Smaller even than that. And it is gray, as gray as this day is gray, as gray as cinder block. Unpainted cinder block. This *hacienda* is not painted. Maybe seven thousand, or six, or even less, I whisper.

front door, holding back *los perros bravos*. She yells at Beto that he has to take care of them, quickly, and he squeezes through the door. They are

the first horse we saw on the beach of

once they are barking ferociously from

ing the living room. I guess because it has a sofa and a stuffed chair in it, arranged curiously due to the tight

three paces. And see inside the mouths of their doggies their yellowing, salivating incisors. Their claws dig rabidly into the slippery cement floor, and

and continually leap at us, their necks jerked back at the pull of leash and collar, their eyes on our throats. Alma screams at Beto, who has been straining to hold them back, to take them outside, and he obediently does. Which creates immediate, soft-sell real-estate serenity again, and now she can show us the features of the kitchen. They have tiled the counter. They will certainly go ahead and put doors on the cabinets if we buy the house. And replace the faucets. And finish the trim around the windows. And paint. Whatever color we want, we just tell them! They both lead us up the curved, rail-less cement stairs. It stinks of wet, snarling dogs up there too. The large bedroom, big enough for a *cama matrimonial*, a vanity, a chest of drawers. And there is that terrace on the other side of the sliding door, which they will fix too. To admire *las vistas*, I step outside, and *la guapa* does, too. We both fit if we stand shoulder-to-shoulder and stay away from the pots, whose brown stems seem dead enough. Across the street to the left, an unfinished, not abandoned at all, edifice, rusting rebar that limps and sags, wilted, from the two rows of block. To the right, another unfinished, the oldest in the neighborhood, a three-story, each lower tier larger than the above one, each level painted another hideous color, and a massive, teetering television antenna centered at its apex. Its architectural influence would seem to be the Gestapo Tower period. It is a friendly neighborhood, Alma reminds from the indoor side of the sliding glass. One step back and we, too, are inside again. Alberto wants to talk about how, if we are interested, to

90,000 American.

A month before he arrived in Veracruz, Cortés navigated his ships into Tabasco. Already on board was a Spaniard named Jerónimo de Aguilar, a shipwrecked priest found weeks earlier in the Yucatán who'd had to live with the Indians for eight years and who wanted desperately to return to Spain (another man, a sailor who had survived along with him, preferred to continue living "*la vida salvaje*"). Aguilar spoke the native language, and through him Cortés gained intelligence from the Indians of this region about the ruling Aztecs. As the followed the river inland, th Spaniards both conquered and made allies, gave and received gifts, such a twenty *doncellas*, one of whom wa named Malintzin—that is, Malinche the mother of *mestizo* Mexico. Ver little is known of her history. What heard is a conflicting fable, at once the story of a *puta* traitor and that o an intelligent, gutsy survivor: Sold a least twice, first by her father—maybe a *cacique* from a distant village, though maybe not—and then again by Nahua tradesmen from Xicalanco, and then yet again, until she was passed on to the Spaniards. She lived with Cortés and gave birth to a child named Martín (a child never legally recognized as his, and doubly disrespected when Cortés's legal wife bore him an other son and named him Martín). She eventually married another Spanish soldier, Juan de Jaramillo, who traveled with Cortés.

Don't I have to go see, with my own eyes, where Cortés's first me Malinche's? It's not easy to figure out the exact location, much like the Chalchihuecan beach, not some thing that any guidebook or state tourist agency seems to be aware of but on my own I have enough: somewhere on the Río Grijalva. To get there you have to go to Villaher mosa, the capital of Tabasco, Mexico's petroleum state, otherwise made infamous by Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* as the hot, mos quitoed jungle that God cannot tame. Of course you can still fly there (the city came into existence because an airplane landing strip was built there for oilmen), but now you can also take one of three classes of bus. The finest, the UNO, brags that it seats recline into beds—*asiento tipo cama*. It's the most expensive ride, but it's a lot cheaper than any flight. And it's all night, so no hotel charge either. A deal.

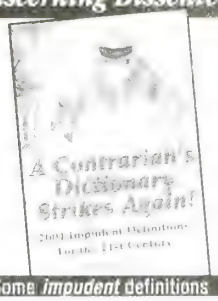
A ship ride in the night, bouncing and sway, slowing down for the *topes* that seem half a bowling ball big, speeding by the bogged-down trucks with the highway divider lines passing under the middle, inches from trucks and cars going the other direction, the moon, almost full, racing alongside in pursuit, slicing

rough the blotchy clouds. When
sun dawns yet again, she says she
miserable, sighing "couldn't sleep,
h a horrible night. Says she will
ver do this again, never. It is hot
the bus terminal, it is humid and
gle, it is more of the Ugly Town, of
obbering men and lewd whistling.
ot the expensive cab ride to the
te, escalatored Liverpool Mall in
uch of a tourist bus or an agent's
vice, not the espresso coffee there,
ot even a visit to a clothing store to
ok again, for a long time, for *pan-
lónes*. She is still sighing. She says,
do not want to do this again.
erywhere a fever of people who
n't know, who can't help, who do
ot. Not the waiter who serves us as
lough he were a decorated colonel,
oth too haughty and too obse-
nious. Not the food that stinks.

Back at the depot I stop a cab
iver. His name is Jose, and he says
e will drive along the Río Grijal-
a—a road that disappears during
e rains—until we reach the Boca
e Chilapa, which is where the road
ill end. He has no bloody hearts of
sus hanging from a chain on the
irror. No Guadalupe magnet on
e dashboard. Not one biblical
vent recognized on the windshield.
No tassles off the headliner. No baby
ictures clipped to the ashtray. He
oesn't wear dark glasses.

Passing piles of dirt and sandbags,
assing the indistinguishable con-
truction or demolition, passing by
he traffic cops and through the acrid
cent of roasting tires and plastic—
ny border town, the unromantic ug-
ness of Mexico, that gray exhaust
ime of rattling automobiles and
leaze bars and shrieking *música
ontaña* or heavy metal. But then the
sphalt does end, and a clay dirt,
et, begins to spray José's white cab
ike a cake frosting. And suddenly
he light, that light that pours into
our eyes, turns green. It is the jun-
le of *la región de los ríos*. This is
where the Indian inhabitants—in
Tamulte de las Sábanas and Buena
Vista—are against the government
nd the government is against them.
Taxes are too high, José explains,
nd so they don't pay them, and the
government offers no services.
Dodge the potholes in the reddened

The Perfect Gift for the *Discerning Dissenter*



Some *impudent* definitions

Anti-abortionist: Believer in mandatory motherhood

Moral Man: Someone who hasn't sold arms, drugs or health foods

Name Dropping: Of all droppings, the worst

Ten Commandments: Clearly, they need Ten Amendments

The State Religion: Looking young.

Voting: If giving people the right to vote really mattered, they'd take it back.

Win-Win Situation: One side wins, the other side whines

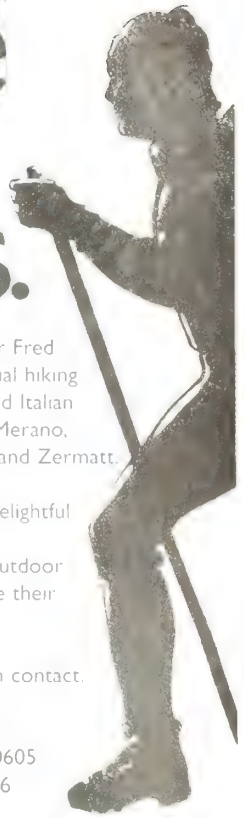
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I like it

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SOLUTION TO THE MAY [illegible] PUZZLE

L	A	T	E	B	R	E	A	K	I	N	G	N	E	W	S
O	R	A	L	S	I	Y	S	I	N	U	R	E	L	I	U
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T	E	S	T	L	E	I	S	E	T	R	E	H	E	R	R
O	C	T	E	T	S	D	S	Y	E	A	S	T	S	Y	C
M	A	R	J	O	R	A	M	B	O	R	D	E	L	L	O
I	T	Y	A	T	O	K	E	E	G	Y	R	A	I	I	A
Z	E	P	P	E	L	I	N	A	U	T	O	C	R	A	T
E	A	S	E	M	E	N	T	N	Y	M	P	H	E	T	S

[illegible]

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*).

[illegible]

road, from one side of it to the other. *Venta de pozol masa, aburrotes y verduras, tortitas de chayote.* Wood burning, [illegible] jungle houses of dried bamboo and palm, which are beside the everywhere-around spindly, olive-green stalks and leaves so un-dry they're [illegible] all wilt. [illegible] black mama pigs, teats full, cross the road like arthritic retirees. Horses, dogs, chickens, ducks. Roosters strutting. [illegible] chew the grass meadows of the wide *pantano*. Swarms of white butterflies swirl above yellow and purple flowers. An iguana waddles into the bush. Trees whose wild branches seem snapshot frozen in a torrential wind, trees like [illegible] that are *coco* and *guayabo*.

The red road dies at a metal gate that looks like any ranch gate, be[illegible] and it parallel tire ruts that have torn out the grass on toward the horizon. The Grijalva is to the side. It's a wide, fast-moving river, [illegible] one angle, fertile brown at another. To go to the proverbial other side, a two-person, wooden *barquito* is tied to the shore. There is an intense buzz of insects, flies that test the human body. There is a hoot that is not an owl's, a coo that is not a *gavilán*'s. Echoing plops of overripe mangoes dropping onto the juicy soil.

It seems so simple and ordinary on the [illegible] directions her head has rested against the back of the bench back seat, dozing, bored, her eyes only half-opening at a here or a there. But [illegible] her purse. She pulls out a compact and lipstick. Lifts her Gucci shades to the top of her head, tucking back [illegible] mirror and makes that putting-on-the-makeup face, touches a pad near [illegible] powder. She pencils dark cherry around the border of those full, gorgeous lips, and then fills the pucker [illegible] rolls them against each other and [illegible]

first and forever was joined with *el español* Cortés. Done, she rests the Gucci's back on her sexy nose and shuts her blue eyes once again and leans back with a resigned, silent sigh. Only another few hour[illegible]

Mexico City, the capital of the *mexicas*, or Aztecs, was supposed to be an island city of trade canals cut through it, *chinampas*, so spectacular that when Cortés arrived there, these Europeans, standing at the height of the Templo Mayor, the sacrificial site of the rulers, could not believe its luxury and splendor, an *indio* Venice. Like the central pyramid, which was flattened by the Spaniards, its stones spread out into what is now that massive *zócalo* and into the walls of the great cathedral, the ruins of what canals are left seem like gutters. And if you never went to Xochimilco you might never conceive of what it looked like: on the banks, the *zacate* grass grows tall beneath the *ahuehuete* trees, the oldest in Mexico, and gardens of azaleas, *belem*, gardenia, begonia, even *orquídeas*, and dogs everywhere watching over it all. The *lanchas* are colored rainbow, red yellow blue, and a curled painted sign, a cartoon of plumage and flags above, labels each uniquely—Maria Fernanda or Carmelita or Daniela or Isabel Cristina. A man pushes you up and [illegible] while you sit at the long, cabana-covered picnic tables and chairs that are the brightest red, drinking beer you bought at the docks, while merchants float up be[illegible] roasted on the cob or *esquite*, kernels of it in a styrofoam cup seasoned with salt and chile and *epazote* and lime. Flowers are sold, as are tacos and candied apples and shelled seeds and nuts, and bonzai plants, and jewelry and serapes, blankets, and toys. You can buy tequila bottled in the hooved foot of a real cow. Or hire a band floating by in another boat that will rope itself to yours for any number of songs—mariachi, marimba, *norteña*, *salttero*, y *acordeón*.

highest point in the kingdom, both in altitude and as the peak of that blood-spilling religion whose gods and priests were unmistakably men. the spiritual heart of Mexico now pumps a *mestizo* blood on the exact same plot of land where the goddess Tonantzin was once worshiped, that place that is the Basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe. It is only a short ride from the *zócalo*, but when you get off at the Cuatro Caminos stop it is hard to know which way to go. A young man who had been standing next to you on the subway offers to guide your transfer to the Basilica stop. He is relatively tall, light-skinned enough to be a Chicano from Califas. He wears a white T-shirt and blue jeans and a black *cachucha* with a WORLD CHAMPION NEW YORK YANKEES logo on it. Quiet, obviously too gentle, you have to stand somewhat closer to him so you can hear him. You don't want to ask his name, whether it's Juan or Diego, and so you don't. Seventeen, he is finishing his diploma, and he wants to go on and be a petroleum engineer. Of course, you say, and you nod, yes, and you say, how good, how smart. You walk together, turning here and there through and in streams of people moving, few words until he leaves you right there, nodding to your thanks, gracious beyond his years.

You are pushing forward through a small mob to where the signs direct you when a small woman shoulders up to you, her hair as white as bleached sugar. She tells you that you have to put away your camera better, tells her she should carry her purse in front of her, because there are people here who will take these things. She says this as you are still walking, and as she is walking, too, and as old as she is you have to keep up with her, and still she is always a half-pace ahead, and because of that you cannot even see her face except as a glance while you step left and you step right. She is dressed like a nun, or a retired schoolteacher, or a nurse, or a grandmother—hard black shoes and white socks, a white blouse that is up to her neck, a black skirt, and a loose black sweater. Her calves are muscular, pale but not

ite or brown. You are going to the
silica, aren't you? she asks, moving
skly. She asks where you are from
d you tell her. She has family in
redo, and outside Dallas and in
w Mexico, and in Africa, and in
dia, and in South America, and
erywhere in Mexico. She is a *reli-*
osa, she says, from a family of *reli-*
osos. You are walking through a
rrow passage with vendors on ei-
er side selling rosaries and candles
d red roses, paper and plastic and
al, and, of course, images of the
gen de Guadalupe on any and
ery kind of box and jar and cup,
t and glass and mirror and chain,
frames of gold and silver and
od. The old woman never looks
. The new Basilica is ahead, and
e is willfully leading the way,
shing, not letting you stop, no
mmercial distraction allowed. So
uch *basura* wherever you look and
every side, she tells you as you
oss through the Basilica's gates.
rash, she repeats, shaking her head.
nd she keeps on walking so fast, al-
ays that little bit ahead—I will
ow you where, she says—and into
he church itself and to the left, to
he side of the main altar and an on-
oing Mass, until there you are,
anding with her on a gliding elec-
ic platform, and above is Our Lady
Guadalupe—the blue mantle, the
old frame, the real image and not
ll the replicas and reproductions
at you have forever seen. As your
yes lock on it, you are choking up
some unexplainable way, maybe
om the shock of this unexpected
xperience, and you have coasted to
he other end, and so you have
epped off to stare at the Virgin, to
ake sure, and you read, *¿ . . . no es-*
oy yo aquí/soy tu madre . . . ? Am I
ot here, am I not your mother? The
nciana has stopped, too, for the first
me, at the opening of another hall-
ay over there, so that you can see
er old face, even if it's at a dis-
nce, and she is looking back at
u, and she seems pleased. You
ok away and up for only a mo-
ent, since you have selfishly
epped onto the gliding platform
nce more, and when you look back,
he has disappeared without you
ver thanking her. ■

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ONE STE

The modern sneaker picks up

This sneaker, the Air Max Deluxe by Nike (2 pounds, 5.7 ounces; $140), is a direct descendant of the *fin de siècle* canvas "duck deck," considered revolutionary for its rubber soles and ventilation eyelets, and used for yachting, the tennis court, and those casual occasions when people wished to avoid the sweaty discomfort of tight leather boots with thick heels. The earliest sneakers kept a low aesthetic profile, demurely seeking to camouflage themselves in skin tones, but just decades later the deck shoe has mutated into something entirely unrecognizable. The Air Max, with its sinuous biomorphic shapes, membranous panels, and waffle-iron soles, heralds what may be the final stage of the sneaker, the equivalent of the Flamboyant style of the late Gothic. But it is also a response to something greater than the giddiness of its designers. A running shoe for a society of nonrunners, it is meant not to complement our physical prowess but to supply it.



Running, once bound to the very survival of the hunter-gatherer stalking an animal or dodging one's charge, has lost its great significance for us. As running devolves into mere recreation, engaged in by those with collapsed arches from widening waistlines, the new sneaker evolves more to protect than to propel. The Air Max's rubber heels have metastasized over the sides and tops of the shoe like the armor of tanks and amphibious transport units. Its exaggerated cushioning—the tongue, a swollen slab of foam three or four times as thick as the tongue of a loafer; its bolstered walls; and its nearly two-inch-high soles—embodies something far more primal than the pride we take in athletic strides: it speaks to our fear of falling, specifically of the urban fall, the bone-crunching tumbles we take on tarmacs and hard pavement. This sneaker, more likely to guide its wearer across concrete plazas than over the dirt and grass of the countryside, safeguards us from the constant threat of an embarrassing regression to all fours.

We learned to walk on heavily textured surfaces and have never completely adapted to the asphalt sidewalk and polished basketball court that offer our feet far less traction than uneven grasslands and rocky steppes. As roads and sidewalks lose texture, the soles of our shoes become more complicated and patterned, tiny rubber landscapes that mimic the primordial landscape pitted with potholes and eroded with meandering gorges. According to the virile rhetoric of sneaker ads, shoes' elaborate treads (their "flex grooves" and "traction wraps") allow serious athletes to negotiate rugged terrain, but these bumpy soles simply do what our new synthetic environments do not: they help us to maintain our balance. The bottoms of our sneakers tell the story of the foot's diminishing relationship with its past—and our growing dependence on man-made surfaces, on cityscapes free of the imperfections that we depend on for keeping upright.

DRWARD

ot leaves off, *by Daniel Harris*



With its "dual-pressure Air Sole unit for hard-core impact protection," the Air Max Deluxe isn't meant to be perceived as a shoe at all but is a kind of machine, the podiatric equivalent of a race car, a supersonic roadster that Nike invites you to take "for a test drive." In order to show us what's under the hood, the state-of-the-art gadgetry that would otherwise remain buried within its humid depths, the Air Max turns itself inside out, letting us see, for instance, its shock absorbers, the very guts of the machine; its midsole (made of polyurethane, "for a firm ride") is equipped with "thermoplastic" pods of compressed gas whose portholes are windows onto the sneaker's plush cushion of internal coils. What lay inside the shoe used to be the foot, but now we have an impressive motor of "composite shank plates" and "heel pulley Fit systems" that provide "the rocket fuel for big take-offs."

The sneaker's mesh upper ("injected with Pebax to enhance support without compromising breathability") is, like the see-through sole, intended to convey a system of intricate mechanisms built into this high-performance engine. But in peeling back the shoe's skin (its "external lock-down sheath") to reveal this and eight other separate surface layers, the shoe's designers have effected a subtle anthropomorphosis. The sneaker's dissection, recalling a Gray's *Anatomy* diagram that lays bare the human body's muscles and tendons, suggests a strange hybrid of the mechanical and the anatomical, a plastic exoskeleton that evokes epidermal layers of hidden panels, with a flourish of stitching that hints at the promise of mobility. The quiet message embedded in the shoe's noisy design is that the modern sneaker in all its mechanical wonder is not a high-tech prop for our athletic fantasies but a kind of substitute for the modern foot, a necessary prosthesis for an existence in a Teflon world of adamantine surfaces and hazardous uniformity.

The foot that will sit inside this sneaker was once a hand, before its prehensile capacity was taken over by the foreleg, freeing the back legs for standing and walking. This decline in function has made the foot a gauche part of the body, an absurd appendage with little aesthetic appeal. Now that its utility has been degraded even further by automobiles, escalators, and airplanes, space-age sneakers such as the Nike Air Max Deluxe, with shimmering Mylar panels suggestive of astronaut suits and the trajectories of satellites, no attempt to solemnify the foot and to restore to it the dignity of human motion. Yet despite efforts to elevate it, this sneaker is nothing more than the new back paw of ancient monkeys who now reel around on their fingertips, exploring galaxies no more distant than shopping malls and parking lots.

...and Harris's the author most recently of ...ate, Quaint, Hungry and Romantic: The ...sthetics of Consumerism.



THE CHAIRMAN HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

A new book about Alan Greenspan opts for access over insight

By Michael Thomas

Maestro: Greenspan's Fed and the American Boom by Bob Woodward. Simon & Schuster, 2000. 276 pages. $25

In June 1998, I went to a wedding held on a fine estate in the Berkshire foothills of Connecticut. The day being inclement, a series of large tents had been erected to shelter the company in attendance. A very grand [illegible] Rich. I would [illegible] net worth was seated in the tent under which the actual ceremony was to be performed. Famous too: every third or fourth [illegible] this author monument to the late-twentieth-century notion that we now live in a "celebrity," to give the beast its more common name—a culture in which everything to moral or intellectual distinction. Barbara Walters, Henry Kissinger, the [illegible] Smith, the [illegible] Henry Kravis, that sort of person. the score, among whom were interspersed a few old friends, such as myself, from the bride's parents' earlier, less [illegible]

[illegible] appearance of the bride, the tent was literally abuzz; the guy wires sang with a particular high-pitched, high-energy vibrato bordering on [illegible] Someone who has heard it can ever forget it. It is the sound with which the well-known greet one another. It shimmers, vocally, with the [illegible] thrill of knowing—or supposing—what the right to call out "Henry" or "Barbara" (or now, I suppose, "Bubba") in a familiar way says about one's own station in the grand scheme of things.

And then, suddenly, a silence fell on the assembled multitude, as if a great muffling veil had been dropped from [illegible] silence such as only the sudden, unexpected appearance of a true superstar, a megawatt star, can produce in a busy, buzzing crowd. I looked up, wondering whether perhaps, what with an archbishop at the ready to perform the wedding rite, Christ Himself had decided to drop in.

And actually, by the standards of the day, a deity was present: Alan [illegible] up the aisle to a choice front-row seat.

The mood of the moment was such [illegible]

author of, among other books, the novel Bak-

that if a lake had lain athwart his path [illegible] to the very front pew, it would have parted. It was a moment that has stayed with me, a moment that my reading of Bob Woodward's *Maestro: Greenspan's Fed and the American Boom* has reawakened.

Reawakened because Woodward's book is written very much in the spirit of that day three years ago. The spirit to which I refer is, quite simply, awe. Much of America stands in awe of its own wealth, of [illegible] did until the recent downturn (indeed the Fed supremo's star has fallen so far so fast, and so hard that the front page of the *New York Times* is reliable [illegible] gauge of the gusts and zephyrs of received opinion as I know, recently ran a piece about his collapsed reputation).

Woodward's awe for his subject is manifest and variegated. Partly it is the awe we reserve for those who pretend to an understanding of matters we lesser mortals (myself, Woodward) cannot begin to fathom, or perhaps

· not meant to fathom. Partly it is the
ı ense respect — a better word might
. "bootlicking"—that access-driven
ı rnalists such as Woodward barter in
· urn for a whisper in the ear, a glance
a diary page, an aside behind the
: nd. This respect, I need hardly add,
mes cloaked in anonymity: virtual-
· the entire book, apart from snippets
ucked from other, more responsible
urces, such as the *Wall Street Journal*,
nsists of unattributed, rephrased, or
ne suspects) just plain made-up state-
ents from unnamed "knowledgeable
urces." Reading *Maestro* strength-
ıed a conviction I have held for some
·ars now regarding the identity of
)eep Throat": namely, that the shad-
xy informant of *All the President's*
len, and possibly a number of grave-
ırd sources in other Woodward books,
ay very well have been Woodward.

Maestro gives the impression of hav-
ıg been written in about an hour.
ime frames are confusing (I was sel-
)m absolutely sure what year I was
ı), and serious analysis of any topic on
hich the sincere reader might wish
enuine enlightenment is lacking—
·hether this concerns exactly how
ıe Fed liquefies the system at mo-
ıents of actual or potential stringency,
r exactly why the crisis at Long-Term
Capital Management threatened to
issolve the world's financial struc-
ure in a daisy chain of defaults (and
·hy it was thus appropriate for
Greenspan's Federal Reserve to
rrange a bailout). Woodward pretty
ıuch repeats what he is told, gener-
lly by big shots whose desire for wide-
spread public education on lofty fi-
ıancial matters is, at best, contained.

Among these, indeed, right at the
op of the rankings, is the chairman of
he Fed, whose skill at oracular gob-
ledygook and technocratic double-
peak is unmatched. In America's var-
·ous public religions, the chairman of
he Federal Reserve is the high priest of
money, wizard in chief when it comes
o the greenback and the mysterious
orces that drive markets this way and
hat. When I read a passage like the fol-
owing, I have to wonder whether
Woodward's grasp of fundamental fi-
ıancial matters equips him to under-
tand someone like Greenspan, for
whom oracular, Delphic locutions are
ı very useful stock-in-trade. Here is
Woodward on the pricing/productivi-
ty nexus that, according to him, has
preoccupied Greenspan for most of the
past decade:

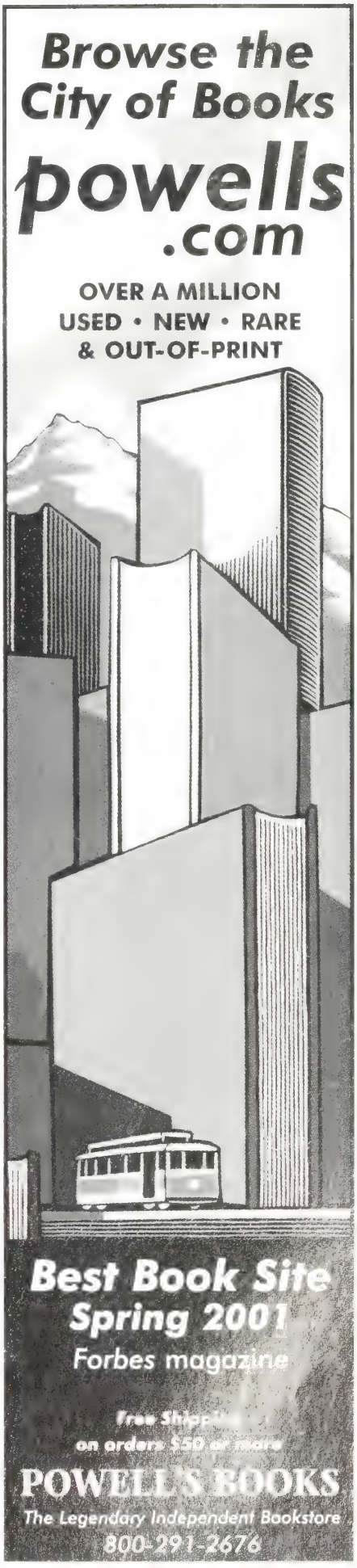
> Take some item with a market price of
> $10 — say, roughly $6 in labor costs, $2
> in other costs and $2 in profit. Suppose
> the price stays at $10 in a low-inflation
> environment, other costs remain at $2,
> and profits go up to $3. That would
> mean labor costs had to be lower, at
> about $5.

At which point, Woodward gives us a scene in which Greenspan gathers to him a pair of top, Ph.D.-bedecked aides and presents them with this formula, which he has written out. "Price = labor costs + non-labor costs + profits." Not exactly a Newtonian moment, and not really helpful to the reader, since it puts the cart of profit, always contingent unless prices are fixed by cartel, before the horse of costs that are there to begin with.

If life were this simple, a smart man like Mr. Greenspan would have come up with the answer to the question that has bedeviled him: where's the inflation? Basically, the U.S. economy, as with so much else in our national life, is about supply, demand, and what you can get away with. It is my opinion that Greenspan, like his great patron Clinton, and like the public- and private-sector accountants who cook up the numbers, has proved especially adept at the last. And then there's "hedonic pricing," essentially a scam, with a strong but artificial disinflationary bias that keeps the inflation and CPI figures where presidents and central-bank chairmen ambitiously mindful of their "legacies" like to see them.

You will find nothing about such matters in this book. One cannot escape the impression that *Maestro* suffers from a failure to respond to the very challenge faced by its subject: to fight for long-term truth and understanding in the face of the markets' compulsion to turn a quick buck.

I was personally struck by the fact that, even though the mission of the Federal Reserve is to protect the value (or, if you prefer, the purchasing power) of the American dollar, the phrase "foreign exchange" is nowhere to be found in the index. Indeed, the dollar



"I was absolutely knocked out by Barbara Ehrenreich's remarkable odyssey....
You can't put the damn thing down. Bravo!"
—Studs Terkel

Nickel and Dimed



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—Juliet Schor

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per se receives scant mention. Woodward seems to think that the Fed is largely about the impact of economic and fiscal forces on the Dow Jones Industrial Average, and that the real story lies in the Fed's endless thrice-weekly—then-that—25 percent tinkering with short-term interest rates (though, as he points out, Greenspan's Fed as often as not has put a long, tightening pause in succession instead, with hawks on the horizon and easing just as the man-of-war drew nigh, sails filling, crews running out the guns). In both of these assumptions, he is wrong, except that he repeats them, outright and by implication, so often that one wonders whether he may not have been indoctrinated in this view by his subject.

Not enough is made of the reality that the Fed is basically working for those who have access to, and employ, capital at wholesale prices. It runs the game only the big boys can take a hand in. For instance, back in the 1990s, in an effort to counter perceived recessionary pressures, the Fed pursued credit-easing policies that made possible the notorious "carry trade," a leveraging scheme that basically amounted to borrowing from Uncle Sam at 3 percent and lending the same money back to him at 6 percent. Wall Street was enriched by hundreds of millions of dollars; the rates paid by the man in the street on credit cards and car loans barely fluctuated, but it is these latter that drive the economy at the ground-floor level.

The foregoing qualities and lacunae make Woodward's book virtually worthless to anyone in search of a serious understanding of what has gone on, and why, in the U.S. capital markets since Alan Greenspan succeeded Paul Volcker as chairman of the Federal Reserve System in August 1987. There is a certain amount of good gossip here, as well there should be, and some room for entertaining inference: a [illegible] that clearly existed between President George H.W. Bush and his fellow Yale alumnus Treasury Secretary Nicholas F. Brady seems rooted in the contempt felt by the "white shoe" crowd for the "black shoe" crowd, and vice versa, in the Ivy League back in the days of the *ancien régime*. Reading between the lines leaves little doubt as to which faction Woodward, himself an Old Eli, belongs. On the other hand—and this really does tell us something we need to know—Greenspan seems to have found instant rapport with Clinton, another artful-tongued "black shoe" striver enjoying the trappings and prerogatives of an office in theory so high as to be beyond any swerability. (Indeed, it is to Clinton more than anyone, that Greenspan owes his eminence, and not for policy reasons but for the instant canonization that attended upon Greenspan's being given the seat of honor at Clinton's first—1993—State of the Union address.) This is just lagniappe, however. Woodward's book is written for, and marketed to, the general reader, but one would need a fairly broad knowledge of the book's subject to understand how wrongheaded and prejudiced it is.

What we need to know is how we got where we are, and what role the sainted chairman of the Fed really played in getting us here. A good place to begin is with none other than Henry Kissinger. Woodward's book contains several amusing, and perhaps meaningful, parallels and links between the present chairman of the Federal Reserve and his friend the former secretary of state and national security adviser Henry Kissinger. Oddly, both Kissinger and Greenspan attended George Washington High School in the Bronx, where there must be something in the air, or in the drinking water. One hates to imagine what rough beast may even now be slouching down the Grand Concourse, slavering for power and "insiderdom." Perhaps the place should be razed.

Going forward, and allowing that the rungs of the ladders by which the two men ascended in their respective spheres might be painted different colors to reflect different tastes, there is much to be said for the view that what Kissinger was to geopolitics Greenspan has become to "geo-economics." The latter, after all, is a man whom more than one business publication has dubbed "the world's central banker." Kissinger dominated, so to speak, a world denominated in the balance of powers; in his time, Greenspan dominates a world denominated in the bal-

a coil payments. Moreover, I find in Greenspan's way of putting things much that reminds me of Kissinger's ponderous style.

More important than these perhaps incidental parallels, however, is a notion I would like to put forward; namely, that Greenspan's ascendancy is really a legacy from Kissinger.

The American boom to which Woodward refers in his subtitle is based on one large root cause that he neglects to mention: the virtually absolute hegemony of the dollar since the early 1990s. In its way, the dollar is the Microsoft of currencies. It breaks a good many of the rules, but so did Bill Gates. Windows is basically a lousy operating system, but what choice do I—the general user—have? So it goes with the greenback. Its market share is so great it can overwhelm errors of management (macro- and micro-) that would have sunk any other circulating medium (gold, the yen, the pound sterling). The world is literally flooded with dollars, to the point that there really is no viable alternative store of value. It is a truth generally unacknowledged that countries that the best way to protect them against exchange-rate depredations is to reinvest them in the country of origin. If that nation is large and growing (both in population and by conventional measures of output, investment, and consumption), with a voracious public- and private-sector appetite for capital, this is almost a sure bet. The more dollars that are printed, the more dollars that flow back to these shores and eventually "buy American," or at least invest American.

Which brings us to the Kissinger-Greenspan nexus. The oil-price increases interested Kissinger mainly in their geopolitical (think "Iran") implications, as his own memoirs testify, but what we will someday come to realize, however, is that the principal legacy of the OPEC seventies—one beneficial to the United States and harmful to almost every other country—lies in the fact that oil purchases were transacted in dollars. These transactions were financed overseas, under the rubric of "petrodollar recycling" (devised by Citibank, a Greenspan co-conspirator in much else, just as the Chase was Kissinger's economic arm); they therefore lay outside the control of the Fed and every other official monetary authority. By the end of the 1970s—as I recall reading at the time in the much respected *Bank Credit Analyst*, we did not know within $350 billion (!) how many "petrodollars" were out there.

Countries with no dollar-earning capacity with which to pay their oil bills were beggared. The United States, however, thrived. By the time the 1980s rolled around, we owned the world, so long as no rival arose to challenge our currency. Toward the end of the eighties, the yen briefly did, but even then we were overwhelming the Japanese with dollar outflows (the so-called trade deficit). They might have asked us to pay for Toyotas in yen, which would have created a different set of problems, but they already had too much of the stuff for their own economy to digest. The Japanese had no choice but to buy Treasury bonds, and to build Toyota plants on American soil. And so the strong got stronger. When you are the only game in town, all must play by your rules.

Every party ends, however. Surplus dollar capital began the protracted paper chase that from August 13, 1982, would drive the Dow Jones Industrial Average up a dozenfold, to over 11,000. Meanwhile, back at the Fed, Alan Greenspan fought what he perceived to be wage-driven "inflationary pressures" on the factory floor with his niggling interest-rate adjustments, while trillions in surplus dollar capital were pumped gaspingly into as nasty a speculative bubble as has been seen. Possessed of a blind faith in the virtue of "investment," notwithstanding his belated recognition that the terms of such investment might become irrationally exuberant, the Fed chairman sent his troops storming ashore. But the battle that needed to be won may well have been on another beach.

So it seems. Since Woodward's book saw the light of publication back around the turn of the year, a terrible hissing sound, the noise made by air escaping a balloon, has filled the paneled rooms in which the great men of Wall Street share out the public capital. Why these things happen the way they do (more reminiscent of the sermon Oliver Wendell Holmes's "One Hoss Shay": "All at once, and nothing

"...singularly hilarious tone and timing."
—*Entertainment Weekly*

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first,/Just as bubbles do when they burst") remains as much a mystery as why cattle suddenly spook into a stampede, or why lemmings, by the thousands, pitch themselves over a cliff into the sea. Is it something in the lemming? Something in the sea? Shortly after Greenspan took office in 1987, the stock market experienced the most traumatic one-day convulsion in its history. Fourteen years later, after Lord knows how many studies and symposia, the whys and wherefores of that October break remain obscure.

So what did Greenspan bring to the party? In my estimation, John Kenneth Galbraith got it right in an op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, in which he referred to the chairman's "theatrical talent." A great wave was building; Greenspan happened along to catch it, and his surfing style was just what the moment, and the public, wanted. He looks and sounds serious, he looks and sounds profound: exactly the sort of chap you want to preside over nearly two decades of sheer financial lunacy. This is a man unmatched in his mastery of the elephantine jargon preferred by salesmen of all brands of snake oil: "We need to be especially vigilant not to be mesmerized by the current tranquillity of the inflation environment," he tells the Economic Club of New York in 1993. There is an impolite word for this sort of ponderous blather. When I meet a man who describes his interest-rate tinkering (and associated press leaks) as "an asymmetric directive," I make a mental note to take my wallet into the shower with me.

Say this for the chairman, though: when the rich and mighty get into trouble, he's there with the pail. When the "reset" variable-interest junk bonds issued by Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. in the RJR Nabisco takeover looked to be taking both the deal and the famous leveraged-buyout firm down the toilet, he was there. When Mexico tanked, he was there, as he was for Wall Street in '87 and '93, and for the Wall Street houses that had loans to Long-Term Capital Management in '98. And all this time the money supply appears to have gone on growing, almost as fast as Uncle Sam was able to adjust the figures to show that it was not. And all the while the chairman kept a vigilant eye, lest so many jobs be created that the wages demanded b East Hampton gardeners would b driven to levels unconscionable to th Washington set ("Sally and Ben," a al., with whom he hangs out).

How the world will look o Greenspan twenty years hence is an one's guess. There have been othe great men on whose words the finan cial world hung: some, like Pierpon Morgan, have gone into history wit reputations burnished; others, like Ne York Federal Reserve governor Ben jamin Strong, the Greenspan (so t speak) of the Roaring Twenties, hav not done as well. Woodward has mad a dedicated effort to secure a niche i the pantheon for his man. *Maestro* is fine, ringing title, designed to make imagine a Toscanini of money, or least a Leonard Bernstein. But I wou argue that for every great musicia who ascends to the leadership of great orchestra, there are a dozen oth ers who get there thanks to adro trustee politicking and a flamboya but not necessarily musicianly pod um manner. My own money is on th proposition that, in time, Greenspa will be ranked with the latter.

INTERIOR DECORATION

Politics as lifestyle accessory

By Mark Kingwell

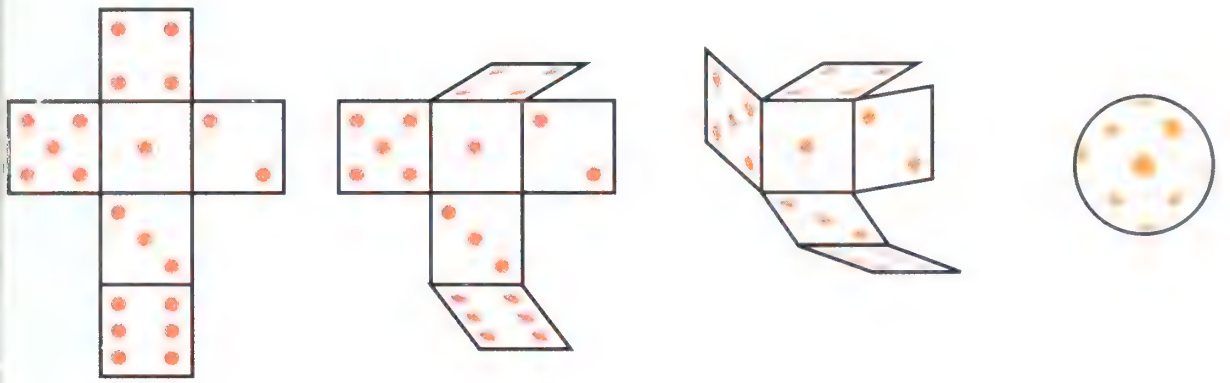
Discussed in this essay:

Life Style. By Bruce Mau. Phaidon Press, 2000. 624 pages. $69.95.

The content of *Life Style*, like the concept it names, is familiar, though Bruce Mau, the graphic designer whose work this heavy, lush volume documents, is by no means a household name—unless perhaps the household is a garden flat in Chelsea, a loft conversion in Amsterdam, or a Frank Lloyd Wright knockoff in the Berkeley Hills. In recent years, however, Mau's work has become stealthily ubiquitous, from his early designs for the cult-success Zone Books to recent advertising campaigns for mainstream bookstores and museums. His type designs, which artfully combine old-fashioned serif faces with clean modern sans-serif styles, ar much imitated: countless exhibitio guides and gallery pamphlets show h influence, and when he began using sans-serif typeface called Interstate few years ago, derived from famili highway signage, it was suddenly ever where in leading-edge books and d sign magazines.

Mau has collaborated with co temporary visual artists on gallery in stallations in Europe and North Ame ica, and with global-celebrity architec such as Rem Koolhaas and Fran Gehry on books, buildings, and park He travels the world making desig presentations to corporations (Un versal Studios), magazines (*I.D.*, *Th New York Times Magazine*), and a galleries and museums (New York Gagosian Gallery, the Deutsch Guggenheim in Berlin, the Getty Re search Institute in Los Angeles). Late ly he has attempted to reposition hin self as an artist in his own righ building multimedia installations i Vienna and Toronto that claim to u

Mark Kingwell is a contributing editor of [illegible]. His new book, The World We Want, *will be published by Rowman & Littlefield [illegible].*



pret the stress of contemporary life
ou haven't seen a Bruce Mau design
eady, in a bookshop or gallery store
magazine layout, if you haven't (a
le more probably) heard someone
p his name, you soon will.

Life Style is structured as a loosely
ronological account of Mau's ca-
r as a graphic designer, from hum-
begimmings with the three-person
m Public Good, which operated
t of a small Toronto apartment
d had "business meetings" each af-
noon that were really television
gaks, to the recent international
llaborations with Koolhaas,
hry, and other stars of the global
esign-and-architecture universe. It
ncludes compressed descriptions of
he major projects of his studio—de-
gns for the Andy Warhol Museum
Pittsburgh, the Seattle Public Li-
rary, the Walt Disney Concert Hall
Los Angeles, and the Schmidt
oca-Cola Museum in Kentucky,
nong others—as well as snippets of
ersonal reflection, lists of bland and
ften self-contradictory imperatives,
iniature essays, and scattered apho-
isms. There are scraps of rather
awkish memoir, accounts of meet-
gs with the famous (John Cage,
hilip Johnson), a much-reproduced
Incomplete Manifesto for Growth,"
ven a copy of the notoriously diffi-
lt design-knowledge quiz Mau used
s a job ad in a Toronto newspaper.

The principle of selection seems to
ave been more inclusive than critical:
n the evidence, Mau is deeply en-
mored of even his least impressive
creations. According to the copy on the book's beautiful deep-purple cover, these accumulated ephemera, taken together, will be "more manifesto than monograph . . . a singular album of playful and critical statements about the visual and cultural trends that influence today's image-driven context." (Purple is just one cover option: the book comes in an array of eight accessory-friendly colors, like the iMac computer, including patterned orange, gold, deep blue, and hot pink.)

Each installment of this international success story is accompanied by visual elements drawn from the project itself or the wider media-scape. There are gorgeous photographs and computer images, charts and drawings, bits of type and picture morphing across the page. Any number of the resulting spreads are eye-catching, sometimes stunning essays in the visual presentation of information. The early sections on the Zone books, in particular, make them even more beautiful and interesting than they were in life. And the thick, creamy paper, bound together in the chunky, not-quite-square format, is a pleasure to caress. *Life Style* is not content to be merely beautiful, however. What sets this book apart from others of its type, what elevates it from obscure niche effort to a flag of the zeitgeist, is its intellectual pretension. Mau wants to do more than document his practice as a successful graphic designer; he wants, like just about everyone today, from advertising copywriters to chartered bank C[illegible] , [illegible] himself to be a sophisticated intellectual, the savviest of cultural critics. In this he shares the pretension of others in the stratosphere of contemporary architecture and design, including his former collaborator Koolhaas, for whom Mau designed the 1,376-page doorstop studio document and alphabetical reflection on the nature of scale called *S,M,L,XL*.

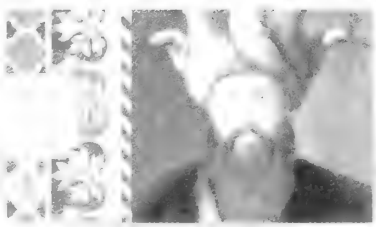
At 624 pages, *Life Style* is only about half the size of Koolhaas's effort, but it is, on the surface at least, twice as ambitious. Whereas Koolhaas took two basic ideas—size and the alphabet—and spun them into a thousand uncontrolled but somehow interlocked directions, Mau and his design studio have constructed a scrapbook of their work over the past two decades, from the original typography of the Zone books to recent art installations and park designs. But greater ambition, and greater evident need for intellectual credibility, have not altered the fundamental economy of appropriation that governs books of this type. Indeed, the resulting object is a thick slab of free-floating beauty that quickly found its proper place on [illegible] brushed-steel coffee tables and Meccano-set bookshelves of the continent's smarter [illegible] firms, as well as the display windows of fashionable Me[illegible] don boutiques, [illegible] multicolored stacks, beautiful pillars to support silver *objets d'art* or over-priced art [illegible]

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In a showdown of mythic proportions, Richard the Lionheart and the Sultan Saladin brought their armies face to face to battle for the Holy Land. A dual biography of these fiercely determined rulers, *Warriors of God* brilliantly captures the fervor and the fury that fueled the Third Crusade.

"Compulsively readable.... A remarkably intimate and engagingly detailed account."
Kirkus Reviews

"Provocative."
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www.doubleday.com/extraordinarylives

The appearance of *Lab Style* as a commodity fetish creates an interesting tension with the book's contents, because this volume is not merely an extra-large résumé of the work of one particularly hip graphic designer; it is a manifesto in the grand style, an "intervention" by a man who believes that design is an inherently political act, a man who believes that design can save the world. "Life style," the text begins. "There are few terms that have been as savagely commodified and gutted of meaning in recent years. Our first instinct is to leave its empty carcass to the vendors and merchants. But in the spirit of *détournement* (the diversion of aesthetic artifacts into contexts of one's own device), we are wresting it back. We are interested in recuperating and reinvesting the term 'life style' so that it speaks of the designer's role in shaping the lives we lead and the world in which we live. . . . Style is not superficial. It is a philosophical project of the deepest order." And twelve pages into the book, in a sort of opening-trailer section featuring full-page photographs and portentous aphorisms, one comes across a picture of a beautiful model reclining on a copy of *S,M,L,XL* and the words "Unless we can come to terms with the global image economy and the way it permeates the things we make and see, we are doomed to a life of decorating and redecorating."

Thus, the collision of design fragments that follows is more than just the latest example of what people will linger over in art-gallery bookshops; it is also a good illustration of the problems coiled in that overused phrase "the globalization of culture," and what has become an increasingly seductive response to it. At a time when politics is increasingly a topic without a conversation, a formerly vivid aspect of life collapsed down to the pathologies of telegenic personality or electoral irregularity, it is tempting to believe that one can resist global capitalism by producing images and objects that "critique" the system even as they circulate within it, calling the result "cultural criticism." This has become a booming industry, with everyone from software engineers to advertising executives styling themselves (at least for the purposes of marketing and self-congratulation) after McLuhan, Deleuze, Chomsky, or Barthes. The result is a special form of virtually costless intellectual capital: the patina of scholarly credibility without any of the effort of actual thought. It's easy to spot these people, because they are usually the very same ones who argue that there is no difference between art and advertising, or between public discourse and self-promotion.

Architects and designers occupy a special position in this regard, not only because their efforts are the ubiquitous materials of urban lifestyle construction but also because, at the best, buildings and signage and logos too often simply the eye-catching servants of profit, can and sometimes do perform a critical function within our cultural experience. Design is a concrete form of thought, just as personal style is the outward expression of intelligence, the complex coded message of self-presentation. And we are surrounded by design as never before, swimming every day in an ocean of text and image. The individual both versed in this discourse and critical of it has become something of a shaman, a compelling guru of the visual culture.

That is surely why there is such a thing as the contemporary celebrity graphic designer, such as the late Tibor Kalman, whose work was recently the subject of a fawning retrospective at New York's New Museum of Contemporary Art. Kalman, a gifted autodidact with a full quiver of bright but often contradictory ideas, worked on everything from Talking Heads album covers to *Colors* magazine. He was socially conscious, angry, and subversive. It also accounts for the superstar status of Koolhaas, an architect who never seems to build anything. (Even casual culture-watchers now know that Frank Gehry designed the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao; many architecture students cannot name a single Koolhaas structure.) Kalman and Koolhaas are new creatures, the designer and architect primarily as urban philosophers, not shapers of type or craftsmen of edifices.

Architects and designers have not always conceived their work in poli

i t terms the Palladian norms of
ssical proportion or Inigo Jones's
t ions of a well-planned public
ce, for instance, were about oth-
orldly perfection, not mundane
rm—but the twentieth century
s given over to more explicit and
n aggressive welding of the built
vironment to political aspiration.
signers of the Bauhaus, their Art
co contemporaries in America,
purveyors of the International
le—all of them knew, and often
ough pointed out, the close associ-
ons between the shape of daily ob-
ts, including the walls around us,
d the possibilities of progress,
ed, justice, innovation, democra-
and a host of other sometimes
f-negating goals. One doesn't
ve to agree with Ayn Rand's liber-
ian fantasy of the architect as
ilosophical superhero to appreci-
the fast-forward associations of a
eco teapot or locomotive, the
ulting ambition of the Chrysler
ilding, the clean logical positivism
Wittgenstein's Vienna house, or
e democratic utopianism of Le
orbusier's Brazilian and French
using projects.

Sadly, this natural project of wed-
ng design to politics has been de-
sed precisely by the ubiquity of
od design. The Bauhaus idea was
have nothing that was not useful
d to find beauty in use; designed
jects should therefore be made in-
pensive and accessible to every-
e, no longer the preserve of an
te. A revolution in thought would
fashioned by a revolution at the
terial base, at the most mundane
vel of what objects stood in our
oms and on our tables, what
othed our bodies. Such objects are
longer hard to come by. Instead,
ey are all too accessible, reducing
e political dimension of the style
oject to a vestigial whisper.

Taking *Life Style* as evidence, one might imagine the world to be populated entirely by
olated individuals out shopping, all
whom have the pressing problem
how to dispose of their surplus in-
me in stylish ways. Not an incon-
lerable issue, I suppose, especially
r those of us it actually describes,
but it hardly addresses the violence of the global market as experienced by, say, a young woman slaving away in a maquiladora in Ciudad Acuña, Mexico. Lofty sentiments about the appearance of books and billboard advertisements somehow lose their urgency when one considers real questions of justice and poverty, the equitable distribution of resources, the challenges of global climate change, overpopulation, and the destruction of wilderness by energy companies eager to power that image economy that so concerns Mau. *Life Style* is much worse than a cheerful, apolitical celebration of consumerism; it is instead an attempt to claim the stage of political action that succeeds only in draining everything meaningful from the category. By the same token, it is too simple to say, at the level of the object itself, that the book is a triumph of beauty over content. Mau attempts to expand the limits of the book, combining image and text in a way that goes beyond both; instead, he wraps himself in an impervious layer of intellectual slickness, making the combinations of text and image somehow less than each alone.

The ironies of this volume multiply even as its flimsy theoretical underpinnings become more and more nakedly exposed. Point 12 of the "incomplete manifesto for growth" enjoins us to "Keep moving. The market and its operations have a tendency to reinforce success. Resist it." Mau should have taken his own advice more seriously. "We admit that we are not inhabiting these roles and executing these responsibilities as elegantly or effortlessly as might sometimes be suggested in this volume," the text tells us. And yet that blithe caveat invites a series of arguments with the very issue of lifestyle the text studiously avoids. There is a higher-level contradiction here between rhetoric and reality, and simply noting it offhand, as if that were enough, makes Mau no better than the uncritical "people" he criticizes who "tend only to look at the contradiction and then stop." Mau says we must face our contradictions or be doomed, he repeats, to a life of Sisyphean redecoration.

What does facing [illegible] really mean? Invoking John Cage, Mau suggests that striving to resolve them is bad practice, the holdover of a binding discursive rationalism that will keep us from "growing." Well, I guess nobody wants to be puritanical about [illegible], especially these days, but mere "playfulness" about contradiction simply leaves everything as it is. It is no longer enough to document the way the image-economy functions: that simply fetishizes its products, buffing their attractive surfaces to a high sheen rather than penetrating them to any critical effect. Such an effort is diverting, maybe even reassuring in an odd way, but sooner or later it loses whatever critical bearings it possessed and ends up adding to the already massive stock of smooth consumer objects that need to be demystified.

And at the level of the object, of the book itself, does it matter that the design of a page makes it hard to read, makes its ideas virtually opaque? I think it does, especially when the words that are obscured are, as far as I can make out, the following: "These days most 'new' design increases noise at the expense of signal: increasing obscurity, decreasing legibility, turning readers into viewers. Often, of course, this is because the signal itself is not as rich as the noise. We are not so quick to abandon the signal." *Life Style* is itself an extended noise/signal problem, one that, finally, descends into a haze of beautiful but meaningless static. Turning its pages feels like channel surfing or wandering mutely through a downtown mall. Partly this is a complaint about what books are for, what they can do. Whatever today's celebrity graphic designers might think as they attempt to make themselves the philosopher-kings of the branded world, there is no substitute for thought conveyed in [illegible] ing, where the beauty of type is precisely its functionality, and where its functionality [illegible] comes to the [illegible] issue" of [illegible] should [illegible] fortunately makes it so. ■

SABO

By Bob Shacochis

F

[illegible] it was not [illegible] to [illegible] not totally [illegible] for Susan [illegible] with Sanyal [illegible] behind them, then the surprising tilt of the high plateau and the stack of peaks [illegible] but he had made their reunion unnecessarily tense, running the dial of the radio in [illegible] Ramey's pickup truck, until her anxiety got the better of him and he was compelled to say something—"Just relax, Sue"—trying, she knew, to make it sound less a gripe than an effort to understand her, and she had jerked her head up to look at him sharply. He said he was sorry, and she stared out the window at the April sky, its purpled gloom, as they drove westward across the desert and back up into the high country.

She felt somehow that she wouldn't always be like this, prematurely weary and some type of flawed pilgrim, that one day she'd come and live in a place like these piney mountains with a man like this man and never want to hear the bloody news, never feel that starving hunger she carried in her head to [illegible] horizon of a steady, fulsome life. She neither looked forward to that time [illegible] she passed into like a season, a time when she wouldn't readily know the person she was, had been, wanted [illegible] her addiction, her unlimited craving, to know the promiscuous world and its dark enlivening spin of events, the gossip of passing profundities and the massive betrayals, and with an apologetic softening of her eyes she touched Ramey Cooper's elbow and allowed her hand to slip back to the dial and found a clear frequency, a public station broadcasting from Alamosa, letting the commentator's voice soothe her with information. And when the season turned, and she turned with it as well and came home to America to live with this man, perhaps then, perhaps finally, she would stop being angry, so very angry, with the world as she had found it.

"Can you talk about it?" he said kindly, with true interest and naive empathy, but what could she tell him, after all? After Srebrenica she had written, *We stood across the river listening to the cattle trucks roll out into the forests, helpless, superfluous, eating bread, cursing the peacekeepers. Ed opened a bottle of wine*, but she wasn't a diarist, and back in Sarajevo she had pushed the delete button on her laptop and started again, sopping up her professionally useless emotions with the astringent sponge of objectivity. Then, after she went through the tiny nightmare required to file the piece, she went upstairs to knock on Ed's door to say she had to be with him tonight, and artillery shells began slamming into a suburb near the airport. Ed opened another bottle—whiskey, not wine. He thought Sarajevo was the greatest city on earth, and sometimes she knew precisely what he meant and she agreed [illegible]

What could she tell Ramey, really? Girlish melodrama? That she had stopped crying forever, that she couldn't exactly remember when s[illegible] had last cried but now she had beg[illegible] to have pathetic dreams of hers[illegible] crying, sitting hunched at a pla[illegible] wooden desk? No, you couldn't t[illegible] anyone that, could you? witho[illegible] having to endure the trite echo[illegible] your own weakness.

"Yes," she told Ramey, "I can t[illegible] about it, but what is it you want [illegible] know?"

"The violence, I suppose. Did y[illegible] see people killed?" He paused, dow[illegible] shifting for the hill they were clim[illegible] ing, and reconsidered. "Of cou[illegible] you did."

She understood the impulse, t[illegible] universal fascination, behind t[illegible] question, but still it disappointed h[illegible] or, worse, made her disappointed [illegible] herself. She didn't want to thi[illegible] about death, but sometimes it was [illegible] her mind would entertain.

"No," Susan answered. "Ju[illegible] people already dead and people w[illegible] would soon be dead."

"I mean, I have to wonder, how [illegible] you actually—" but before he co[illegible] finish the question, the dog, his ag[illegible] retriever, had snapped out of h[illegible] slumber in the camper to bark fra[illegible] cally, her snout jammed against t[illegible] inch-wide crack of the shell's windo[illegible]

She saw him studying the dog a[illegible] preciatively in the rearview mirr[illegible] "There must be something [illegible] there," Ramey said.

"There's always something [illegible] there," she said, making a wry joi[illegible] and they were quiet for a minu[illegible] scanning the snowy shadows b[illegible] tween a stand of ponderosa pi[illegible] along the roadside, hoping for so[illegible] beast to emerge, perhaps a herd [illegible] sh[illegible]

, until he found a way to reword
s question and ask it again.

"I guess I mean," he said, "how did
u get so tough?" and then an-
ered himself again before she
uld compose a reply. "But you al-
ys were. Not hard. Just, you know,
ll's out."

"Come on," she said with irrita-
n. "I always do the job I'm asked
do, is what you actually mean.
ke you, yes?"

"Like me?" No, he
d, he didn't think
e should even at-
npt the compari-
n.

Fresh out of school,
ey had both landed
eir first jobs on the
ily in El Paso, noto-
ous training ground
soon-to-be-famous
reign correspon-
nts. The border was
prototypical inter-
tional beat, infused
th the grinding
aos of separate real-
ies, but she had
rned Spanish and
hadn't. He had pre-
nded the story was
nly America, mean-
g Texas, and she had
etended the story
as everything but,
eaning the global
uddle. They were
enty-three years old
en, and both de-
ghted to be a part
something that
emed so huge and
ming, but Ramey
d burned out on the beat, while she
ad burned through it.

"Right," Ramey said. "Somalia,
hiapas, all the hells on earth—just
nother day at the office for our girl
san."

"It's not much more than that,"
e lied. "Don't kid yourself."

"I'm just curious," he said with a
rug. "I don't see you enough these
ys to really know how you feel,"
d she let the conversation end that
ay. She knew what "curious"
eant. It meant he wanted to know
she had changed, he always wanted
to know if she had changed, he ex-
pected her to be different each time
she returned from overseas, from
some freshly minted horror, and in
fact so did she, but she hadn't, and
wasn't, and thought, More's the pity.

They left the last patch of desert,
descending into a green valley and
lonely crossroads where they headed
north, the snow-capped peaks of
southern Colorado visible whenever
they topped a rise. The dog, Mattie,



had fallen back into a drowse on her
nest of blankets, and now Susan,
too, couldn't fight her own fatigue
and wanted the drive to end.

"Incredible light," Ramey said,
taking his eyes off the road to gaze at
the spreading orange puddle of the
westering sun.

Yes, she thought, the light, of
course—everywhere she had ever
been the light was incredible, at
least for a few glorious moments one
day or the next, and the remark had
come to bore her. She looked out
her own window away from the sun-
set at the dramatic landscape, gold-
traced buttes and the [illegible] of
canyons, rolling pasture and wil-
lowed bottomland, and was grateful
he wasn't reminded of some place
else, someplace where you turned
the corner and everything was as
wrong as it could ever get.

In Chama, Ramey stopped for gas
and a six-pack of beer, unfolding his
Forest Service map to double-check
the turnoffs to the preserve. "It's not
much farther," he an-
nounced. "Fifteen, twen-
ty miles." She convinced
him to save the cookout
for tomorrow night. She
was really very tired, and
she was hungry and
would rather not wait for
a campfire—of course
they hadn't given her
anything to eat on the
flight from Washington
to Albuquerque. A
block before the town
ended, they found a
takeout stand and or-
dered burritos, which
they ate wordlessly on a
picnic table, and by the
time they were finished
it was dark and they
went on.

The dog came alive
again, barking joyously,
when Ramey pulled on-
to a dirt road, and Su-
san watched the head-
lights swing through a
stand of cottonwoods,
then funnel out into a
meadow, and they fol-
lowed a sign with a logo
like a tepee to the camp-
ing area, the tires suddenly crackling
in gravel, an unwelcome sound you
never expected when the map said
primitive.

"Is this it?" she said aloud but mos-
ly to herself, getting out of the truck.
The tailgate clanged down and the
dog bounded out into the darkness;
Ramey was already whistling her back.
Susan allowed herself a [illegible]
the blazing stars and [illegible]
shivering in the crisp air, went to help
him with the gear.

"There's [illegible]
this place [illegible]

the tent to [illegible] from inside the camper, where he [illegible] dark. "I'm getting vibes."

"Vibes?"

"Yeah. She [illegible] was shoptalk, the idiom of impend- checkpoints up ahead, no snipers waiting in the ruins of deserted villages, no thuggish soldiers suddenly leering at her approach. You gagged on vibes, swallowing them down, recomposed yourself, and kept going [illegible] on no [illegible]

Somewhere, coyotes yipped in the distance, but she had always loved [illegible] hunt, even when it spooked her. "You know," she said, lowering her voice. "*Vibes.*"

She [illegible] without success to sound playful but was too exhausted now to explain. Two days ago she had been in the Balkans, then in Paris for lunch with her bureau chief. The morning she had been in Washington, and now she was here, in a place that felt so inexplicably morbid. She had trained herself to [illegible] intuition as if it were the voice of God, but now she just let it go, she deserved to stop, all she wanted to do was stop and sleep.

Ramey crawled out of the camper shell and wandered around sweeping [illegible] until he found a [illegible] Susan helped him pitch the colorful tent; they hauled in the foam pads and down bags, quilts and pillows, and she went off to the other side of the vehicle to squat and pee, thinking, Well, at least we're the only ones here. She grabbed her tote bag [illegible] tent, shivering again, fumbling for the [illegible] then her jeans and panties and bra, but leaving her socks on and finding a sweatshirt to pull over her head and finally diving under the pile of quilts, wishing he'd hurry and finish [illegible] stop her brain from fretting and just [illegible]

Then he and the dog were in the tent. There was too much activity for a few minutes until they both settled down, the dog's weight happily against the back of her legs, and Ramey pressing against her from the other side, kissing her neck and then her lips, his hand sliding up her thigh to nestle at the top of her legs. He pulled his tanned face back and looked at her as she wanted him to look at her—such hard desire and yet still content—because this is what she had daydreamed about when she had nothing else to go on.

"Is this all right?" Ramey asked, meaning his busy hand.

"Mmm," she answered, putting her dry mouth on his bare shoulder, receiving a scent of her own staleness in return.

"I should tell you about the plan for tomorrow."

"Tell me in the morning," she whispered. "I'm falling asleep, Ramey."

"Don't just yet," he said, slipping a finger inside her, rubbing his face in her hair. "Are you happy?"

"I'm happy," Susan said, her voice barely audible. "If you want to make love to me go ahead, but you'll be fucking a corpse." *Oh, too strong!* she lamented as she fell asleep, feeling his shoulders tighten with distaste. She shouldn't talk to him that way after being gone for so long, but she had done the best she could, offering him the satisfaction of her flesh.

Susan half opened her eyes to the envelope of glowing light surrounding her—tinted panels of aquamarine and white, hearing the rasp of the zipper as Ramey crawled out of the tent with the dog, and she lay there for a few minutes knitting back together where she was and who he was, allowing the strange gravity of the dream she'd been having to draw her back down into another hour of delicious sleep. Ramey, it seemed, had caught a fish with an unearthly pattern to its skin, like blue-and-gold madras. "It's a grayling," he insisted. "Of [illegible]," she objected. "You're supposed to know and you don't," and after that she couldn't recall the conversation or the images, only the quietly welcome sensation of lust. Then she awoke abruptly, sitting straight up and for a second wary, the tent a startling electric dome above her and [illegible] with direct sunlight. Slipping on [illegible] panties and running shoes, she lurched outside with her toothbrush only to be horrified.

"Where is this?" she said harshly, her mouth ajar and a fan of brown hair obscuring half her face. She stared at Ramey with a look of [illegible] forgiving disbelief as he crouched over his fire, turning bacon in an iron pan.

"Good morning."

"I'm not quite ready to call it that."

Finally he sighed and looked up at her over the smoke, ruddy, serene, thought, with purpose. Like just any other soldier, she thought, intent on ignoring the screaming awfulness of the world to which he had been delivered. He was dressed like an outdoorsman but didn't look the part—everything about him—the many-pocketed vest, the khaki hunter's blouse, the well-creased chinos and buck knife holstered on his belt, the fine leather boots, the back sweep of his short brown hair, the unstubbled jawline—so fastidious and clean. She knew instantly the cruel thing she could say to him—weekend warrior, wanna-be.

"How do you like your eggs?"

"The better question," she snapped back at him, "is, How do you like my vacation?" Out went her arms as she twirled with disgust. "My God, look! Just look at this place. How can you stand it?"

They were on a rectangle of barren winter-scorched land, a parking lot that was apparently the only permissible camping area, and it looked to her like some forsaken no-man's-land, some zone where nobody belonged. Worse, far worse, was the barbed wire, strung higher than you could reach. They were boxed in by it, and beyond, on the preserve's perimeter, a similar fence line ran down the hill and up another as far as the eye could see toward the snowy mountains. And behind the tent were these chilling, ugly constructions, a row of barn-red latrines

...e guard posts, some with them ...ors torn off or hanging crooked on ...ir hinges, and farther on in the ...ner an overflowing Dumpster, its ...ty sides sprayed with Chicano ...ffiti—*Whites get out*, she translat... —and then stopped reading.

"This looks exactly like the ap... ...oach to a concentration camp." ...e shuddered.

"It's to keep wildlife in," Ramey ...d reasonably, jerking his chin to... ...rd the wire, and he smiled in an ...empt to placate her.

"I've heard that before."

"It's not the most aesthetic solu... ...n, is it?"

She was in transition, still decom... ...ssing, and tried to present him ...h the opportunity to ease her into ...better mood. "Let's just move the ...at," she said with a melody of optri... ...sm, pointing, "down there near ... grove of cottonwoods," but he ...d, no, they didn't have a choice in ...e matter—no camping allowed ...thin the preserve.

"Well then, tell me, Ramey. What ...e hell are we doing here?"

"Ah, right," he said, standing up ...om the fire with the pan in his ...nd, draining the grease over the ...bble in Mattie's aluminum bowl. ...he plan. We haven't really dis... ...ssed it, have we?"

"Getting out into the back coun... ...y. Camping, trekking. You fish, I ...ad. You said somewhere along the ...ne you have to do research for a ...oject you're working on."

"Right," he said. "You've got it."

"What are you not telling me? ...here's something you're not telling ...."

"First, tell me how you'd like your ...gs?"

The dog rose up out of the ...ushed, colorless grass and trotted ...er her to the water jug, as though ...usan might give her something. ...he brushed her teeth and her hair ...d went back to the tent to dress ...hile he finished cooking breakfast, ...ough all she wanted was a cup of ...lack coffee and, despite his tacit ...sapproval, a cigarette. She mar... ...led at his sudden inane secretive... ...ss, behavior she had seen far too ...uch of but never in him, as if—...diculous thought—Ramey were trying to sideline her. To actually compete, she imagined, they would actually have to care about the same things, and they didn't, not professionally at least, but if they did, she was certain her easygoing Ramey wouldn't stand a chance against her. Okay, let's be fair, she scolded herself, stepping back into the sunlight to sit on the ice cooler he had set for her near the fire, taking the cup he offered her for coffee. Let's be honest. But fair.

Ramey paced while he ate, lifting yellow lumps of scrambled egg to his mouth from a tin plate. "Let me explain," he said, essentially cheerful, between bites, but he didn't do a very satisfactory job of it. They'd probably be here one more night—she could handle that, couldn't she?—and then move north or east to someplace much better, the Rio de los Piños, Valle Vidal, fabulous spots he knew she'd love. This was only a rendezvous point, he said. Some fellows were coming by to pick him up at ten, and he'd be back by cocktail hour, and then he'd grill the steaks for dinner, and everything would be absolutely fine.

Susan narrowed her eyes and looked up at him. "Wait. I'm not invited?"

"Sorry."

"Are you kidding?"

But he wasn't. She peered over the rim of her coffee mug and regarded him with a moment's contempt. They had been rocked in the same cradle, so to speak, but he had rejected the magnitude of the world to carve out his little corner in it, writing a sportsmen's column for the Santa Fe newspaper, then reinventing himself as an activist, one of the eco-crusaders of the northern mountains brandishing an acronym—CDC, the Carson Defense Council—at the ranchers and loggers. And now it seemed he had manufactured his own silly intrigue, soon to be whisked off to a top-secret site recently discovered by a nature conservancy, a few hundred acres of the last known habitat of a particular type of cactus known as the Sabo, much sought after for its rarity by collectors, which provided the logic for the secrecy of its guardians. Still,

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she wouldn't mind seeing something that was the last of its kind, especially if it meant not having to spend the day in a place as depressing as this, another of the conservancy's projects, but Ramey wouldn't take her along. "Hey, it's not my call," he said.

"For heaven's sake"—she laughed derisively—"who do you think I'm going to tell?" And his refusal, its patent absurdity, amused her, which in turn had finally made his impatience with her break the surface.

"Look," he said, dashing water over the embers of the campfire, "I'm going to take Mattie for a walk. Just tell them to wait, if they come before I get back."

Susan poured herself another cup of coffee as she watched them leave, Ramey unlatching the complicated gate into the preserve, Mattie's tail whirling like a helicopter rotor. She lit a cigarette and sat back down atop the ice cooler, suddenly engrossed in the fact that she was being sent to Kinshasa at the end of the month, another in a succession of stories, of wickednesses, that seemed to unscroll endlessly. *Is that in where?* he had stumbled on the phone when she called from Paris. Ramey had waited for her to fill in the name of the country but she wouldn't. *Oh, come on,* he said, *not every conversation has to be a current-events quiz, does it?* She told him he must be joking and Ramey said, *I know what you're thinking. Americans don't give a shit. But we do, we just don't know what to do about it. That's like saying,* she had replied, *that you have a lot of love to give, you just don't know how to give it. Right?*

No, not right, he had protested. *It's time for you to come home.*

At the heart of their brief transcontinental contretemps was something she realized she should have learned long ago, that Ramey and his crowd were true provincials and could will themselves to disconnect from anything at all that didn't directly concern them. Crocodile tears—we know the world's a slaughterhouse, but what can we do? Americans didn't even bother with newspapers anymore.

I suppose I've outgrown Ramey, she said to herself, and then pushed away the thought—be honest but be fair. She couldn't think this way for very long without reprimanding herself for succumbing to the elitism that she despised but was everywhere around her and that she was a de facto part of, too. People across the planet were fighting and dying for the right to achieve exactly what Ramey had, what he possibly had even earned—the freedom to not have to care about ugly, soul-rotting things. You could measure America's greatness, she supposed, by the evolution of its frivolity. Ramey was a perfectly decent man, but at the moment she hated him, abandoning her in a place like this to sneak off into the cloak-and-dagger world of the Sabo cactus. Totally ridiculous.

Off in the distance, in the direction he had gone with the dog, there seemed to be some sort of commotion, Ramey shouting over Mattie's yelping, far enough away for Susan to be unsure of what she was hearing, but, even faintly heard, the dog's pitch and its tempo, unbroken, like a war cry, were enough to push her into a state of alert. Ramey, or the dog, or both, were in trouble. She hurried across the compound and through the gated entrance to the preserve, up a small knoll that, to her astonishment, once she had mounted its crest, revealed an expansive valley bowled between spectacular peaks. Below her, the land dropped gradually to a narrow serpentine river coursing its way through meadows and copses of willows and farther down a thick stand of piñon pines, and it was from there, she thought, somewhere in the pines, that the clamor of Ramey and the dog rose. She scanned the fat green clumps of trees but saw nothing until, from the periphery of her vision, she noticed movement farther down the valley, and looked up in time to watch a small herd of animals, six or seven of them maybe, turn and disappear up a rocky slope onto a wooded hillside.

She thought that was probably it, old Mattie had flushed some deer and Ramey had lost control of her, but the assumption would not stand up to the fact that she could st hear Ramey yelling and the dog blood song unabated. Then stopped, the silence deepened, a not a minute later she saw h emerge from the tree line into t meadow, cradling what seemed to a dog in his arms, but that w wrong, too, or at least if it was a d it wasn't Mattie, because the retrie er was whirling around Ramey's le rearing, trying to lift herself up, a he seemed to be kicking at her. S heard the crunch of gravel behi her and ignored it, probably his ri had come, and instead watch Ramey come puffing noisily up t hill, circled by the now insane dog

"Oh, my God."

Ramey was red-faced, bellowin "Grab Mattie, damn it! Get her the truck!"

She grabbed for the dog's coll but it wasn't there, no telling wh Mattie tried to scale his leg aga going for the fawn. He was kneei her and kicking her away, and Sus was screaming now, too—"Get aw Mattie! Stop! Bad dog, Mattie!" tugging her by the thick blond h at the scruff of her head, but th wasn't doing much. Susan could control the dog either until s thought to whip off her belt a loop it around the dog's neck, a then immediately the dog calm down and obeyed her lead.

"I suppose I should have thought that," said Ramey, and explained t obvious: Mattie had separated t fawn from its mother, and witho thinking he had scooped the fawn to keep the dog from killing it. N he didn't quite know what to do. S san had lifted the heavy dog and flu her over the tailgate into the cam and lowered the back window to lo her in, only then focusing on the t men who she knew had been the watching them—the secret agen she ridiculed them to herself—star ing next to their mud-splashed je with their arms crossed and th faces pinched with censuring expr sions, wrath-filled apostles of natu Ramey, embarrassed, introduced hi self.

"Why is she here?" challeng the one with the cowboy hat a ponytail.

'Oh, go to hell," said Susan.
ney apologized, assuring the two
that she was not coming along
'ower was first and foremost an
tude, an act of will against which
set your own if you had any
ne whatsoever, and then it was a
lous, deadly focus on one thing,
vever big or however small, to the
lusion of everything else no mat-
what, and she had seen his type
every bad place she had ever
n, a man who couldn't exhale
hout asserting control. Ramey
s suddenly right in front of her,
hping the fawn into her arms, and
a moment her heart was moved
its quivering, and then her anger
elled back, and the fawn was
thing but a weight she carried,
unimportant.

The way the two men looked at
r—a nuisance, a bug—only
rred her on, and Susan taunted
em unable to check her hostility.
nd what if I do?" she said, mock-
them and their fatuous intrigue.
/hat would you do to me if I
ne along?"

"Susan!" Ramey commanded.

"Let's go, Mr. Cooper," said the
cond man, whose flat-faced au-
ority and neatly trimmed beard
ade him seem to Susan essentially
reaucratic, to the paperwork born.
our hours on the roads, two on
ot—we've got to go."

"Wait a minute," she said, ap-
baching Ramey, her voice rising.
/hat do you expect me to do with
s animal?" and they argued about
the ponytailed man telling Ramey
never should have brought the
vn up out of the meadow, the other
n, squinting, saying Ramey should
ve known dogs weren't allowed in
e preserve and that the fawn must
taken to the ranger station in Tier-
Amarilla, Susan siding with the
thsome ponytailed man, telling
mey he should have known better
n to take the fawn away from the
a where its mother could find it,
d Ramey telling her how sorry he
s but he had to go and she was just
ng to have to manage the situation
her own, go to the ranger station
find a vet clinic and give them the
vn and they would take care of it.
u take it, she said, but the men ob-
jected. They argued until the ponytailed agent had listened long enough and said, "Look, man, to hell with the fawn, the place is crawling with fawns this time of year. We've got to go."

"Do you see how people are?" she said to Ramey as he turned from her to join the men, her voice and hands trembling, but of course he didn't.

"Nothing's as dangerous as stupidity," she seethed, and let them go.

The fawn was still a package cradled in her arms, fragile but empty except for its undeniable pulse of warmth, its tiny head tucked and hidden in the crook of her elbow, and Susan carried it back to the meadow, returning the creature to its rightful place in the world. She stomped down a circle in the tall, dry grass, and it wounded her, when she knelt to lay the fawn there, to see the desiccated worm of its umbilical cord, still attached to the animal's pure white underside, a coat as soft as a rabbit's, spindle legs tapering into doll-like hooves, and the spots along its body seemed so truly precious that she gasped with appreciation. Now it was her fawn, and she felt terrible for it, gazing into its dark wet eyes, like every newborn's first-opened eyes, and she could neither bear to look into them nor bear to look away. There were small globs of froth clinging to the tip of the fawn's perfect coal-black nose.

Susan rose from her knees and stood still, listening for the doe to call, but it didn't happen. She reached back down to stroke the fawn goodbye and was appalled to hear its eerie bleat, so much the sound of a distressed baby, a human baby, any type of baby, devastating in its helplessness, and she choked a sob back down into her chest, where it actually hurt, thumping against her rib cage like an inside-out punch. Your mother's coming, she told the fawn. Damn you, Mattie, she said. Damn you, Ramey, and then hiked back up to the camp.

The dog whined for its freedom, but she refused to release it. She found the novel she'd been reading on the plane, set up one of the camp chairs, and tried to concentrate, but the strangely sinister image of Ramey with the two men kept invading the sense of its sentences. Susan knew they weren't going off to destroy but to protect—not people but something perhaps symbolically more important than people—yet the image of them and the very fact of their clandestine mission enraged her, until finally she had to admit she was being irrational, that the real problem was that she couldn't stand being left out of anything, it drove her mad to feel excluded.

Was that it? she wondered and then thought, No. The problem, perhaps, was Ramey himself, just Ramey. His innocence—was that it? she wondered again and thought, Yes. There was something inexcusable about Ramey's innocence, and for a moment she entertained a dire urge to wreck it. He was a solid respectable man, he had his own integrity in his own world, but—and this was what she didn't quite understand—the very process that resulted in acts of atrocity depended upon the detached insouciance of men like Ramey. They obeyed any rule you threw in front of them until it was too late, they were loyal to some abstract notion of a game well played, any bloody game; or if they broke a rule, it was out of ignorance, or it was an accident or simple thoughtlessness. And here's what got you, she thought unkindly—an honorable man riding off in a jeep with arrogant bastards, convinced he has joined a noble enterprise, and returning home with a certain penetrating deadness in his eyes and a tongue that will never talk about what happened or his complicity in it. It's as if they disappear into a void, she thought, and they never really know what hits them.

Well, Susan thought, putting her book down in the grass, apparently she could be honest but she couldn't be fair after all. Everything she looked at, even here in New Mexico, she saw through a lens of war and horror, and all that had happened was Ramey had left with some men she didn't like to go look at a cactus and develop a scheme for its [illegible] seeing clearly, [illegible]

how else could it be with Ramey, how else could it be with love, and how else could it be, for Christ's sake, when you didn't understand what you needed to imagine yourself, your life, anchored to solid ground?

[illegible] with Ramey, the first year hot and complete but followed by these six fractured years of stuttering passion. Now you see me, now you don't. Yes we are a couple; maybe we are a couple; maybe we're not a couple. Each year she had to wonder anew, as she might with anybody: Can I really live with him? I love him, but can I really live with him? And the answer always seemed to be, Yes, but not now, and the mystery was, given the inevitable gaps in the relationship, why did he keep believing in it, why did he keep holding on? Those were the big questions and she couldn't answer them. All she could answer was, once Ramey started taking her back, the pattern of returning to him began to shape her definition of home. I'm going home meant being with Ramey, but how could that really be enough? Where was the solid ground, given his insufferable callowness, the increasing magnitude of the distance between her life and his? She didn't have the answer but sprawled back in her canvas chair and let the sun burn into her until she fell asleep.

An hour later she woke suddenly with a fully formed admission on her [illegible]. Her truck—he was simply not adjusting. Despondent, looking in the cooler for something to eat, she discovered instead a bottle of white wine, opening it with her penknife when she couldn't find a corkscrew in Ramey's kitchen box. "Oh, shut up," she muttered, when Mattie responded to her movements by crying to be let out of the truck. Her skin stung from the intensity of the sun, and she rubbed herself with lotion and changed clothes, putting on her boots as well after she had tidied up the bedding in the tent, and then wandered [illegible] her hand, scavenging for firewood. A group of vulgar Hispanic boys, driving an impossibly big car, pulled into the parking lot, Mexican pop music thundering from their radio. One of the teenagers called her over to sit in his lap, and, refusing to acknowledge them, she picked up Ramey's hatchet and began chopping a branch into kindling until they left.

Lowering herself, unsteady, back into the camp chair with her book, she was dismayed to realize she was pouring the last of the wine into her cup. Oh hurray! she cheered dryly. As if the jet lag and the altitude weren't enough, you're going to get snockered too! When she opened the book the words swam on the page, and she let it slip out of her hands to the ground. I need something to happen, she told herself, twitching with restlessness, and then struggled to her feet. She considered going into the tent to lie down but then thought, No, the fawn. What's happened to the fawn? Surely its mother had come to rescue it by now.

Through the gate and into the reserve she felt light with anticipation and then, for a moment, an elusive sense of euphoria. Three ravens rustled in the air overhead, and a band of small tufted clouds dragged the fields with mottled shadow. The trees below in the swales seemed so much greener than before, the peaks and crags radiant with the oblique shafts of sunlight that came with the end of the day. She knew photographers who would kill for the clarity, the brightness of this late afternoon light, the vertical density of the landscape. The beauty beyond the abominable wire fence, beyond the short walk to the knoll and its overlook, for a moment saturated into her heart and made her sigh. But it wasn't an antidote to anything, this beauty, was it? she thought. It only heightened the sorrow of everything, and it made her love her life so much—too much?—that she wanted to scream. So much was beautiful that shouldn't be—wasn't that what she had learned from the photographers, their lenses sharpening and [illegible] the [illegible] the sublime [illegible] death?

A melancholy swept into her as she weaved her way down the hillside and back into the meadow where she had hidden the fawn. Certain that all was well, she listened to the scuff of her boots in the grass and stepped more carefully, and she didn't mind when at first she couldn't relocate the spot where she had left the fawn, and simply wandered around, feeling unusually sentimental and self-absorbed. What she wanted, she decided, was to tell Ramey that they had no business being together anymore, that somehow even in their absence from each other, he was an impediment, he was getting in her way. Say we lived together, she told herself. Say the house was on fire. What would Ramey be doing, she asked herself. Ramey would be watering the goddamn plants.

But almost instantly the decision reared back at her with such crippling force that she felt herself choking, her throat constricting, as if any second she might start to bawl, and she stumbled blindly into the circle where earlier in the day she had laid the fawn, and to her horror there it was. It hadn't moved all day, it hadn't been rescued, it hadn't been fed; its head bounced weakly on the stem of its exquisite neck and it was mewling, and never in all her life had she known her heart to break as hard or crushingly as it did now.

"My God, it's crying," she said, barely a whisper, and then she collapsed, curling herself around the tiny fawn, and unraveled, convinced that she was evil. The sobbing lasted a good long time, and as it lessened to hiccups she felt strangely purified, as if she had endured a rough scrubbing and her self had been opened and emptied and restored to the point where she could finally, finally relax. And she remembered then traveling to the village in central Bosnia. Ed wasn't with her that day, she was with a pool photographer, a Frenchman, and two other correspondents, and a Croat translator not from Bosnia but from Dubrovnik and disgusted by his countrymen, though of course he was silent about that when he had to be. The village was Muslim, and even in the range they could see the gray smoke from its burning houses from miles away, billowing above the tops of the poplar trees. The battle had raged throughout the morning, and the village had been cleansed by the time she and the others pulled up to the first U.N. checkpoint in their armor-plated car, holding their breath while the blue hats studied their creden-

it. Then they were waved through, ...itted a few minutes to examine ... nightmare that was once a small ...pean town made drowsy by the ... of everyday life.

The paramilitaries were gone, and ... army had moved in to establish ...er over the dead. She had stepped ...ne across the threshold of a burnt-... house, the smell of grilled meat ...her nostrils, and stared at the ...red shape of what seemed to be a ...e dog, still standing on the roast-...tumps of its four legs, burnt near-...yeyond recognition, its head tilted ...as if it had died howling. She ...ld hear, outside in the muddy ...d, the harsh laughter of the sol-...'s and the obsequious tone of the ...nslator—Petar, that was his ...ne—as he worked them for de-...s. She turned, startled, at the ...nd of footsteps behind her on the ...crete floor. Then Petar was beside ..., shaking his head at the sight of ... black, erect carcass, explaining to ...an in his heavily accented Eng-... that there was not a name in any ...guage for what had been done ...e. It's just a dog, she had mur-...red in response, even as Petar was ...ing her the story, but she had lost ... mind, and the dog was a young ...slim housewife, and the paramili-...es had made her crouch on her ...nds and knees while they raped ... and then doused her with gaso-..., the flames locking her body into ...ition, sculpting her into a flaking ...rcoal statue of a howling dog, and ... three black lumps of ashes and ...e in the corner of the room were ... the dog's puppies but the ...man's children, and Susan had ... er left that room, she was going ...spend the rest of her life in that ...m, wasn't she? and yet at the same ...e—this was the problem—she ...s always turning away.

She lay paralyzed with the fawn ...il sundown, the cold slowly awak-...ng her to her senses until eventu-... she rose to her feet and walked ...ay. Back at the campsite, Mattie ...s eating from her bowl and Ramey, ...at-lit by the fire he had started to ...ok the steaks on, looked up hope-...y as she came through the gate.

"I was just about to come looking ... you," he said. "Were you hiking? How was it?"

"Good," she answered, pulling a beer from the cooler and sitting down, still in a daze. He bent forward into the cave of firelight, full of his day's adventure, and told her about the Sabo cactus, and he seemed so earnest and vulnerable she had to turn away from this as well. It took all of her effort just to look at him, to eat his food, hold his body, return his kiss.

"What happened to the fawn?" he asked later in the tent, a guilty afterthought when they had finished with their love-making.

"It's gone," she said, and they never spoke of it again. ■

June Index Sources

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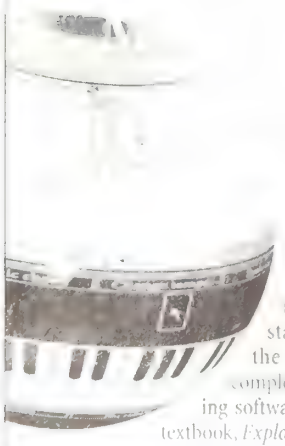
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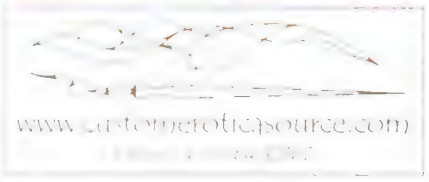
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LETTERS

Biography of Saul Bellow, for its full term, provided occasion for Lee Siegel to write his wonderful, cutting, funny, precise, and honest review of Atlas's debacle.

John Maher
Prior Lake, Minn.

Noise Will Be Noise

I take to heart Garret Keizer's argument that noise is bad in innumerable ways ["Sound and Fury," March]. But I found his citing of Arline Bronzaft's 1975 research to be specious at best. Bronzaft concluded that students who attend classrooms on the train-track side of New York schools lag behind their non-track-side counterparts in educational development because of the noise. Like the oft repeated mantras of the last few years that playing Mozart for your babies will make them smarter and that home-schooling is far superior to traditional schooling, the belief that train noise is the reason for these students' problems does not take into account the complexity of learning. Advocates of Mozart and home-schooling for the improvement of students fail to notice that it takes devoted parents to play Mozart for their babies or to home-school their youngsters. Similarly, the train-track research fails to consider that in most public schools it is the newer, less experienced teachers who are assigned the inferior classrooms. This in itself could explain the discrepancy in learning.

Certainly noise is part of our society's problems. But it is one factor among many and more a symptom of what ails our civilization than, as Keizer argues, the disease itself.

Gordon Reynolds
Big Rapids, Mich.

I enjoyed Garret Keizer's piece on sound. Like Keizer, I am not a fan of noise: my hearing has been wrecked by the noise of guns (nail

and otherwise), saws, and machinery, and I suffer from tinnitus. But of disturbance. For they do not rec- and then there are *sounds*. Like a hundred Harleys on a "toy ride" in the Colorado mountains, or a well-ridden solo bike on a lonely California fighter pilot, I actually miss some booms (they meant Dad would be home soon) and being next to the runway as the old man put that J-79 in afterburner. And oh, my, to tional commerce coursing along ar- I Roads. When I was a railroader, there was one night in Wyoming, with a colossal lightning front moving in on the Union Pa- Carnegie Hall "Man and Nature" classical masterwork.

Whitefish, Mont.

Garret Keizer's otherwise thorough article exploring noise failed to note the small but growing group of "noisicians," electronic artists who Cage and Stockhausen, the best of whom is a Japanese noisician with the noise-name Merzbow, create aural pretend to be music; the compositions are nothing but noise. Although stressful to listen to, a good noise CD can—for me, anyway—"cancel out" other stressful experitraffic. In certain moods, nothing of one of Merzbow's Brillo pads for

Evanston, Ill.

an "anonymous chain letter." In the spring of 1984, I lived in Minneapolis at 912 Twenty-second Avenue South, Apartment 308, where I routinely blasted sixties rock into the wee hours. Each night, the unlucky woman who lived below me came up in her bathrobe and begged me to turn it down. "Oh sure," I'd say—until the next night, when we'd do it again. To that woman, whoever and wherever she is, I just want to say: That was me. And I'm really, really, really sorry.

Steve Blalock
Olympia, Wash.

Don't Fence Me In

Reviel Netz, in his essay on the history of barbed wire [Readings, February], asserts that the "first recorded human settlements" with boundaries "defined by barbed wire" were established by the British around 1900 for South Africa's embattled Boers. Since, as Netz mentions, barbed wire appeared in the American West some forty years earlier, it is not surprising that at least one case of its enclosing people would have occurred here well before the Boer War.

Around 1889, Colonel Robert Hunter enclosed the Texas coal-mining town of Thurber with a four-strand barbed-wire fence to exclude unions and all but force Thurber's nonunion miners and their families to trade only at company stores. (One resulting con- had more to do with beer than with collective bargain- Since Hunter impeded hard drinking townsfolk's way to a favorite saloon "just outside the wire.") The fence resulted in a strike and the town's eventual unionization.

Vera Vonler and Bob Huffaker
Denton, Tex.

All's Well That Ends Well

I was shocked at the recent and, I think, unfair criticism heaped on Elizabeth Nickson after her story ["Where the Bee Sucks," January] appeared. In her piece, Nickson describes Salt Spring Island as a place filled with magical people doing ex- published in response to that story from Salt Spring Island reside Elizabeth White and Sam Lig man [Letters, April] accused writer of distorting the facts to her own fantasies. The letters a claimed that she grossly undere mated the impact of industrial l ging on our tiny Pacific island. vision of our lands being saved government funding, conservat buyers, private donors, etc., dismissed as delusional and unre istic. And what about the fact t the people responsible for the l ging were not willing to negoti with anyone unless the buyers w willing to pay three to four tir the asking price? How dare any predict a happy ending when looked as if there were no hope sight.

Nickson's ideas do sound rat unconventional—especially the about giving the rescued lands b to the fairies. So imagine the s prise of those of us who hadn't ready thrown in the towel when heard our wish granted by the fe al and provincial governments a recent press conference held Vancouver. It was announced t three southern Gulf Islands—S Spring, Galiano, and Valde would share $20 million in gove ment funding to help purchase protect our endangered lands. to this the good news that the ow ers are now willing to negotiate fair market price and you have Nickson's version of the truth coming a reality.

There is a saying: "Be careful w you wish for—you just might get But in this case, I wish to thank Nickson for believing that fairy t can come true.

Andrea Collins
President
The Save Salt Spring Society
Salt Spring Island, B.C.

Correction

A line in the April *Harper's* Index correctly stated that PepsiCo paid federal income taxes in 1999. Pe Co paid no federal income taxes 1998; in 1999 it paid $655 millio tax on $2.8 million in pre-tax profi

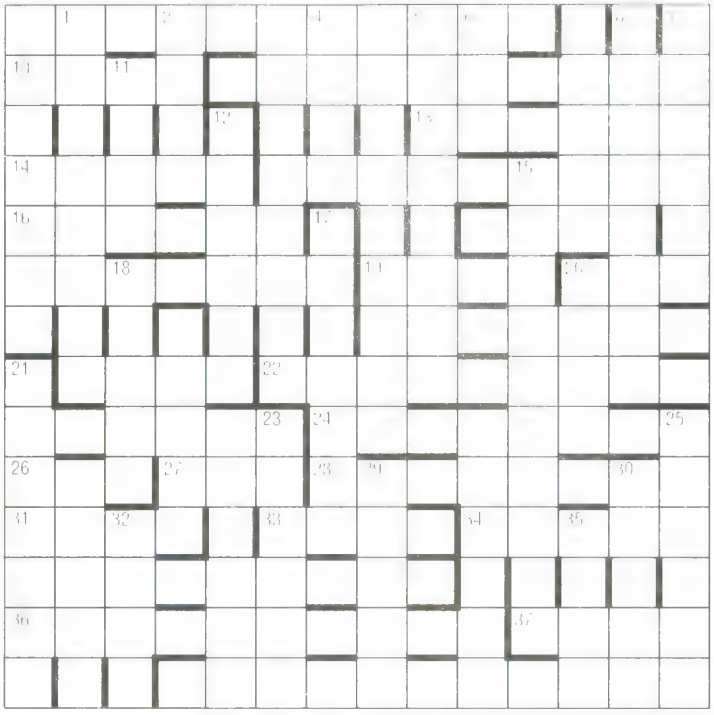
PUZZLE

Lottery

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

Sixteen related entries in the diagram are unclued. Many are uncommon terms (which is the point), and one is of two words. Solvers who identify the common element win the lottery.

Clue-answers include three proper names and one common foreign word. 14D, 17D, and 35D are uncommon. As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 63.



ACROSS

10. Around — like around the house (4)
13. Naked, left for dead, catching a few Z's, gets poke in the nose! (6)
14. African animal put on fire (5)
16. Compact containing some makeup from theatre at York (6)
19. Opponents of 8 Downs, perhaps, finish in minutes (4)
20. Horse sound (3)
22. Asynergia adjusted for negative one (9)
24. No longer overdosed, takes drugs and trips out (8)
26. Palace friend leaves one shot winner (3)
27. The return of, for example, the husky Apollo (3)
28. In favor of energy being held in the balance in plant—big-time (8)
31. Big ruler, small laugh (4)
33. Loser of race locks in hearing (4)
34. Sword I left assaulting person (5)
36. The big story on radium treatment: it covers your heart (10)
37. End of related story (4)

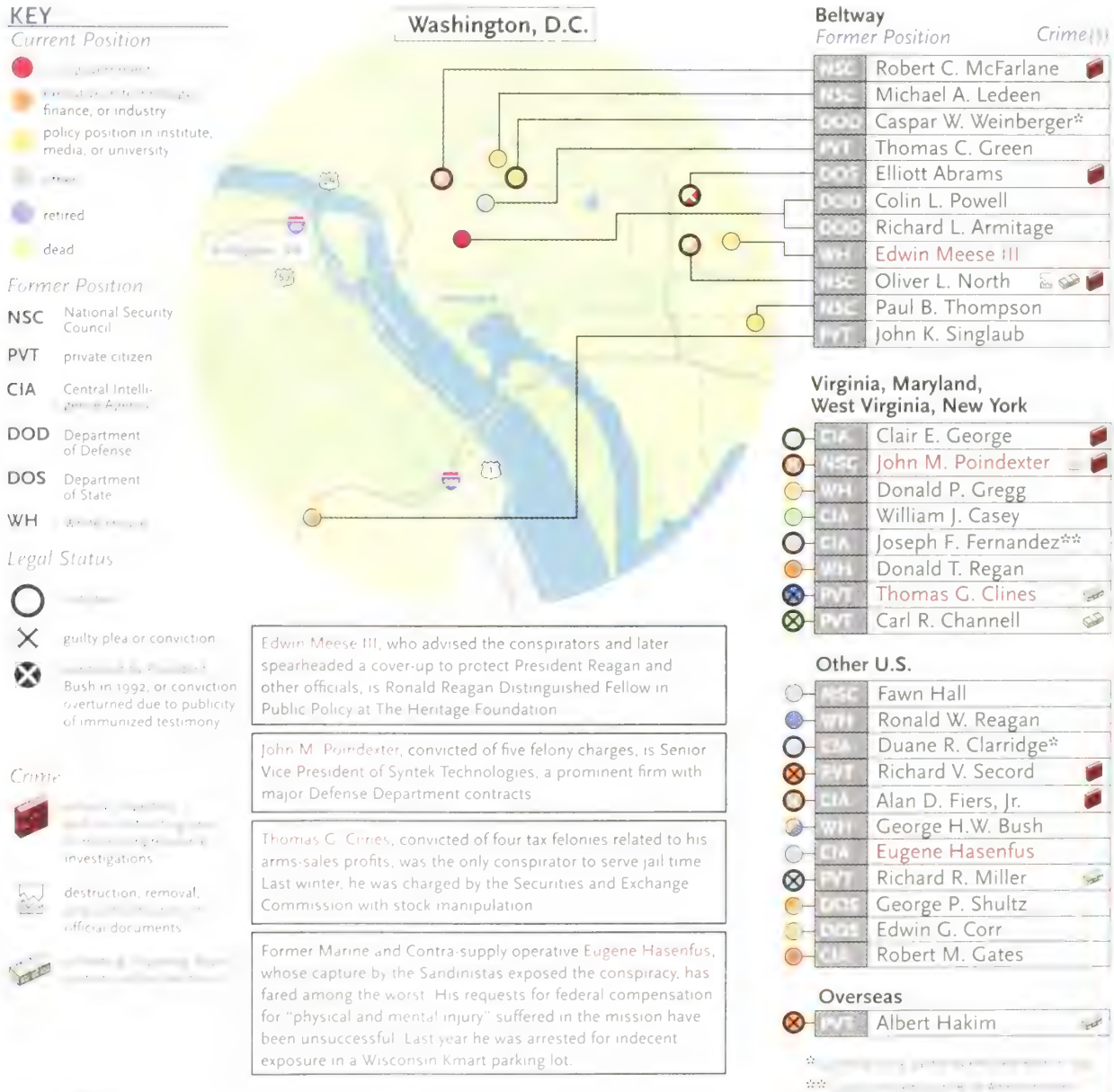
DOWN

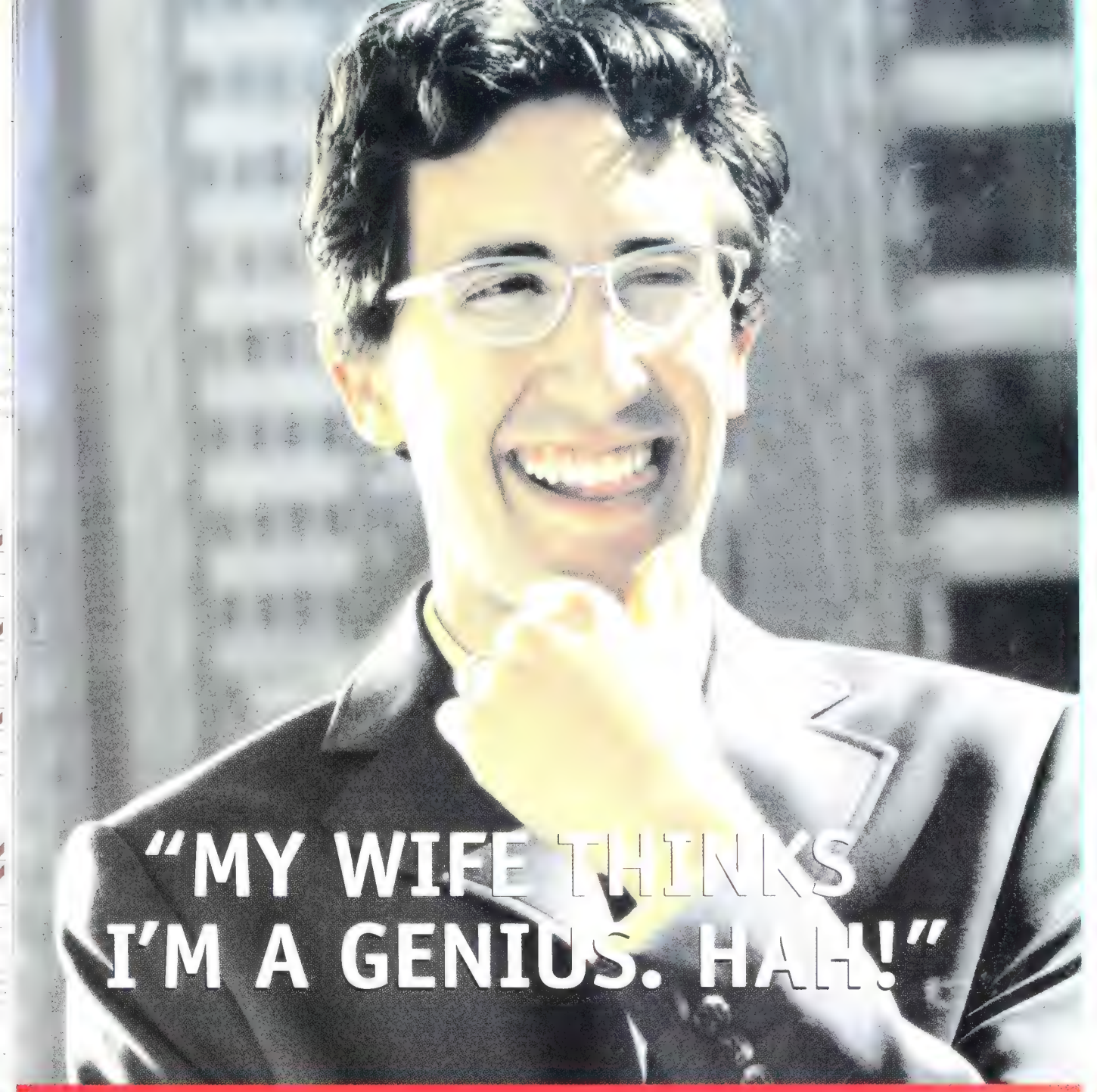
1. Help up, perhaps, and right during precipitation (8)
2. Name on a not available French novel (4)
3. Left a friend to choke on loaf (8)
4. A 2,000 to less than one shot (4)
5. Make gent nuts from at? Some make light of it (8)
6. Somewhat bemused, but I keep my feet on the ground! (3)
7. Beelzebub's half-disguised as supporter of rock (5)
8. Non-Indian friend brings up English eatery (8)
9. Get on NYC tour with House of Representatives? (6)
11. One of the teams dies out (4)
12. At next assembly, remaining . . . (6)
15. . . . to stop and scream about a university where they dish things out (3,5)
17. Courtesan appears from out of the area (7)
18. Drink with reporter, I hear (5)
20. Good values, clean tables, fork included (4)
21. Part of a loop usually put together (3)
23. Head 'er off with stick (6)
25. Continental rate [illegible] (6)
29. Item after [illegible] (5)
30. Brownnose [illegible] (3)
32. During kind of radio identification . . . (4)
35. . . . boater, e.g., quietly brought up idol from Memphis (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with name and address to "Puzzle," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include a copy of your latest mailing label. Entries must be received by [illegible]. From the correct solutions opened at random will be drawn the winner, who will receive a [illegible] Magazine. Winner of the August issue: Winner of the April puzzle, "Steve and Severe," received [illegible] Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition. Winner of the March puzzle, "Pirates of Penzance," was Peter C. Christensen, Los Angeles, California, and Larry Hunt, Los Angeles, California.

PATRIOT GAMES

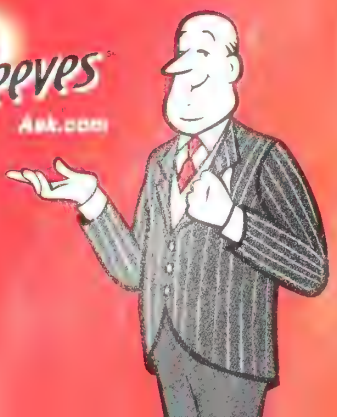
As Washington pays homage to a new administration and grumbles over the scandals of its predecessor, it's worth noting that mo those who participated in the 1980s Iran-Contra conspiracy were never punished at all, and remain entrenched in the nation's p er elite. The appointments of Colin Powell, Richard Armitage, and Elliott Abrams to key federal posts are only the latest rew bestowed upon those involved either in the Reagan Administration's illicit activities or in the cover-up that followed. After ing arms to Iran and funding the Contra rebels' war against Nicaragua's elected government, the conspirators tried to justify t crimes by describing the arms sales as a patriotic bargaining chip for U.S. hostages seized by terrorists in Lebanon; they neglected to ment however, that they charged Iran up to six times the list price for weapons and pocketed much of the cash. Although the independent co sel secured guilty verdicts for eleven of the fourteen men indicted, eight were pardoned in 1992 by President Bush (himself under invest tion) or granted a mistrial because of publicity. Today, nine of those investigated are executives at prestigious firms; an equal number are fessional policy advisers, employed by government, media, think tanks, and universities. Their victims have been less fortunate: 30,000 Nicarag died in the Contra war, and some U.S. hostages have charged that the conspirators' inflated prices extended their captivity.





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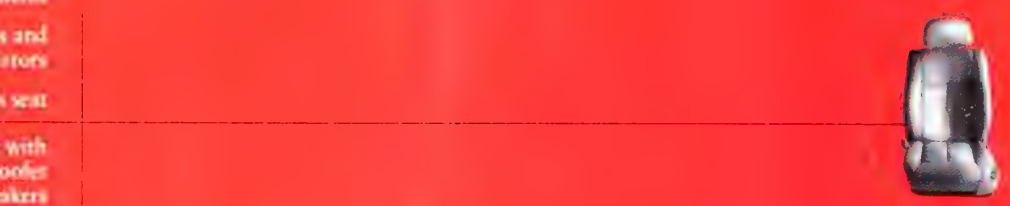
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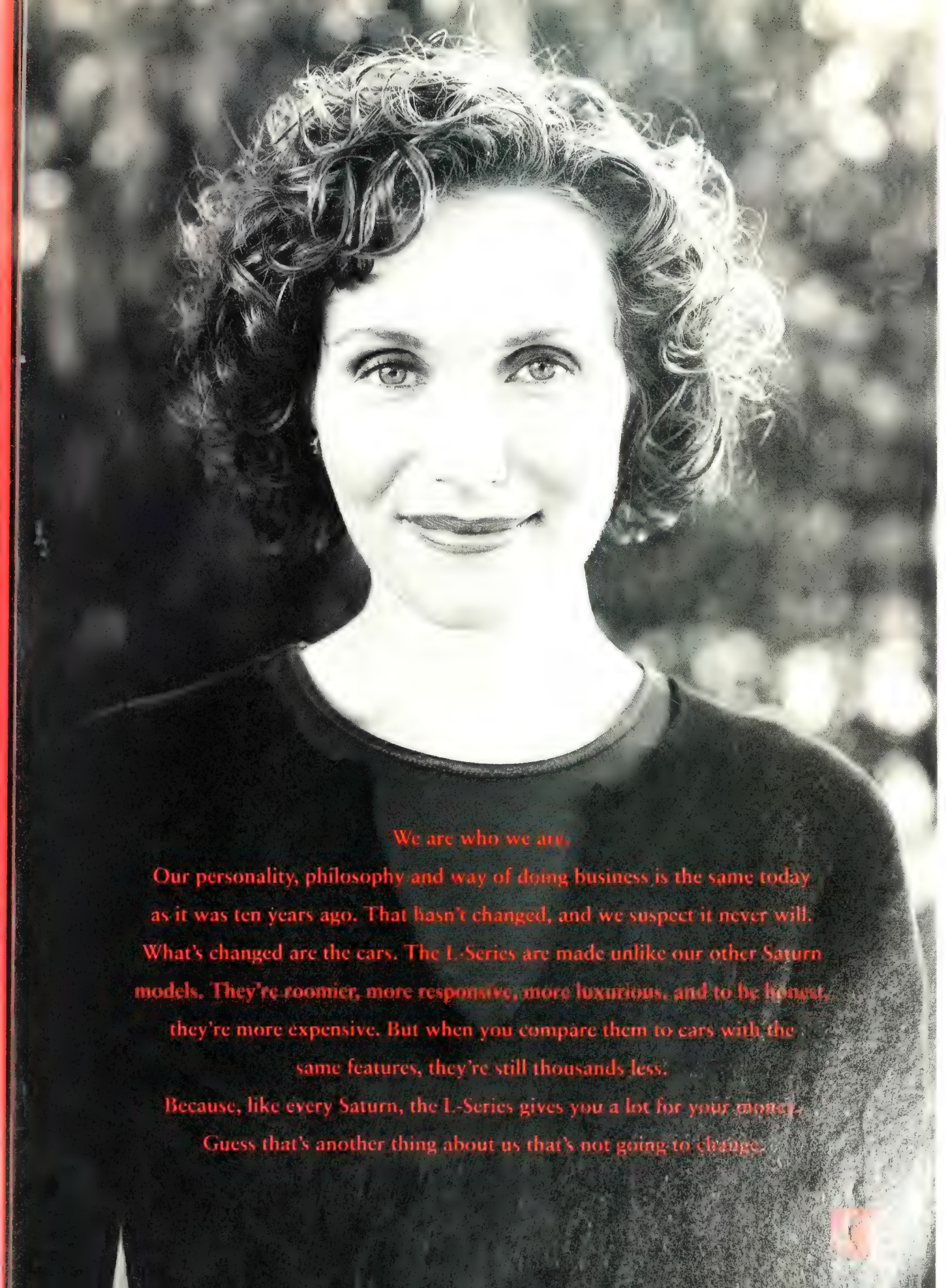






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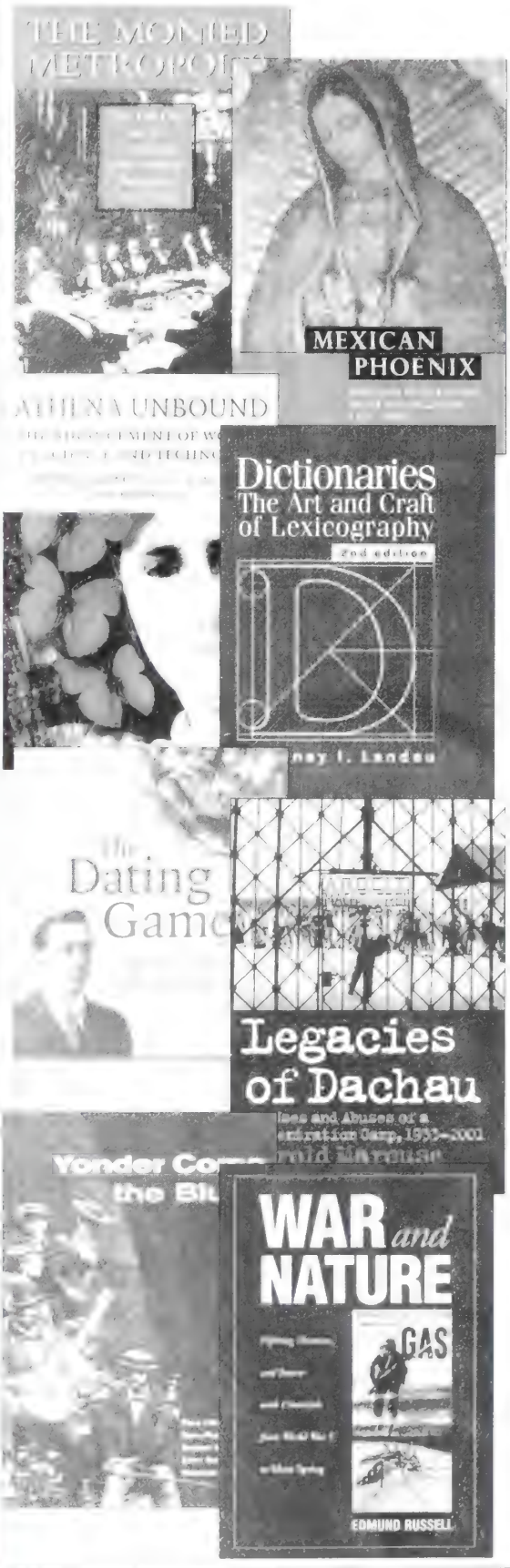
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HARPER'S

LETTERS

Infinitive Joust

[redacted] SNOOT, or whatever I am, I applaud David Foster Wallace's candid and entertaining appraisal of the Language Wars in his essay that masquerades as a review of Bryan A. Garner's *Dictionary of Modern American Usage* ["Tense Present," April]. I would like to point out, however, a problem in his argument [redacted] language use is and should be dictated by convention is vulnerable to the same style of critique Wallace applies to Descriptivism: taken to its logical extreme, Prescriptivism is an endorsement of conformity for its own sake.

I'll borrow Wallace's pants analogy: A boy should face the hard social facts and not wear a skirt to school. Fine. But why stop there? Why not wear only the pants of the most popular color? That is to say, insisting on the conventions of Standard Written English, when taken to an extreme, leads to an acceptance of unnecessary strictures—for instance, the SWE prohibition on split infinitives, which Wallace rightly derides. We should (and I suspect [redacted] er ally does) promote linguistic understanding and acceptance, however difficult that task may be.

[redacted]
Columbia, S.C.

In trying to find a balance between the Prescriptivists and Descriptivists,

[redacted] *ial to Letters*, Harper's

Mr. Wallace cleaved too much to t latter, especially in his condemnati of split infinitives and those SNOO who bristle at them.

Regardless of how the rule ca to be, a persuasive case can be ma for it. Unfortunately, Mr. Walla does not engage the argumen rather, he is content to dismiss outright as arbitrary and anal-rete tive. This is disappointing given defense of *A Dictionary of Mode American Usage* on purely normati grounds: "the reader must now moved or persuaded to *grant* a dicti nary its authority, freely and f what appear to be good reasons."

Herewith is what I consider to be good reason not to split infinitiv (and to grant some respect to a Lat tradition): First, split infinitives bu adverbs and thus suck the life out them. In infinitive constructions, a verbial modifiers should come at th end: e.g., to eat quickly, to dance d vinely, to go boldly. In each of the phrases, the important thing is n what is being done but how it's bein done; consequently, the adverb is the end of the sentence or phrase that is, in the emphatic position. [redacted] *Star Trek*, splitting the infinitive "t go" gives the impression that th thoroughly prosaic act of going most important. Granted this exan ple is spoken, not written, an speech is less exact, but the argumer holds. Burying adverbs weakens the and makes for inferior writing.

Second, split infinitives create "struc tural ambiguity," to borrow a term fro Noam Chomsky. In the irritating (an sadly ubiquitous) phrase "to better un derstand," the mind has to sort ou whether "better" is an adverb or "t

itter" (as in "to ameliorate") is the initive. Why should the mind have sort out unnecessary semantic con- ion? This is why split infinitives set ople's teeth on edge: they are inher- tly imprecise.

I submit that there is no persuasive gument for split infinitives in SWE d that all Mr. Wallace can offer is e solipsistic "If it feels good, split it."

Greg Felton
ew Westminster, B.C.

David Foster Wallace's discussion distractions in writing is good, ough brief. If you are distracted by y element of a communication to ie point of becoming aware of it, he gues, then the communication is eakened. But this very clever writer such a showoff, and so determined to e funny and clever, that paragraph ter paragraph includes distractions.

I also fault Wallace for his criticisms f Charles Fries. Wallace dismisses ries's standard for judging a diction- ary—"the accuracy and the com- leteness of its record of the observed acts"—by saying that the argument s so stupid it practically drools." Wal- ace goes on to defend this condem- ation by saying that "the fact that ome Americans believe that electric y flows better downhill" would, by ries's standards, justify including a ownhill-electricity theory in a physics ext. But, in fact, Professor Fries has al- ways insisted, as in the passage Wallace uotes, on "the latest principles and echniques of the particular science." hese included, for Fries, not accept- ng what people say they believe about heir habits of language but rather dili- ently observing what is spoken and ritten, and reporting the usage that eems most accepted—quite precisely what Wallace is arguing for in his dis- ussion of SWE.

This having been said, we must be rateful to *Harper's* for having pub- ished, Wallace for having written, and *A Dictionary of Modern American Usage* or having occasioned, this sparkling ontribution to an endless discussion.

Patrick Watson
Toronto

I could quibble with David Foster Wallace over his statement that people no longer believe in intended meaning (a.k.a. semantics, the study of which is alive and well). I could split hairs over his assumption that Descriptivist linguists reject stylistic norms (see Chapter 12 of Steven Pinker's *The Language Instinct*). I could fuss over his crediting of Derrida and the Deconstructionists with "debunk[ing] the idea that speech is language's primary instantiation" (review linguistics, psychology, and cognitive science, though as Wallace would put it, "you'd probably be better off just trusting me"). But what really gets my

[illegible]

[illegible]
Philadelphia

We'll Always Have Gopnik

When I began reading Christina [illegible] review of *Paris to the Moon* [illegible] Adam Gopnik's [illegible]



thetic to her critical perspective on Adam Gopnik, since I have been dis[illegible] more quotidian than inspired. And her Paris is the Paris I love and the one in which I had assumed Gopnik was privileged to live and work. Thus her critique (that for his five years there Gopnik hardly noticed the excitement and [illegible] deeper and more serious than I expected.

But then I came to Nehring's dis[illegible] Gopnik's essay about the two cafés (which I have read):

[illegible]

Flore, respectively).

And I realized I was having the expe[illegible] impressive that [illegible] completely convincing and utterly wrong. [illegible] as perceptive as Nehring could read "A Tale of Two Cafés" and not walk around for the rest of the day with a silly grin on her face, because she had just read something marvelous? Gopnik's essay uses a meditation on the unfashionability of a once famous café to elucidate some essentials of French thought, to capture the essence of French explanations and how they differ from American ones, and finally to link together the two great aspects of Paris: fashion and love. The essay is not the work of someone who has failed [illegible] the culture in which he finds himself.

Oh, Cristina! You are a victim of what you discerned in Gopnik. Like him in Paris, you took a taxi through his piece and did not linger to see and taste and smell what's unique, what's particular, what cannot be found anywhere else.

Michael Bergmann
New York City

The Home Front

Peggy J. Farber's Annotation on the push to place foster children in permanent adoptive homes ["Broken Homepage," April] trivializes the government's reasons for taking children from their parents. She characterizes [illegible] welfare lawyers, we can say that child neglect is not a minor problem. The great majority of cases where we work involve parents with addictions to drugs or alcohol. A filthy house and a child left unattended for a few hours, in the context of a drug or alcohol addiction, demonstrate that a parent is not capable [illegible] for the child.

Some history is important for understanding current trends. The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) amended the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980. Under the 1980 law, the paramount concern of the child-welfare system was the supremacy of the biological family and the parents' rights to raise their own children. The guiding principle in making all decisions under ASFA is the protection of the child.

Oklahoma's Waiting Children, the website that occasioned Farber's article, shows children whom ASFA was designed to help move into adoptive homes. But these children languished in foster care for so long under the old law that they have significant attachment problems and troubled histories.

The push to adoption within two years, which Farber implies is rash, occurs only when a court has determined that the parents cannot remedy within a "reasonable time" the conditions that caused the child's removal. Children deserve a permanent home as soon as possible, whether that home be a safe return to biological parents or placement with a relative or an adoptive family. Although two years might seem a short time to some adults, it can be an eternity to a child.

Downplaying, as Farber does, the abuse and neglect that begin the whole process of government involvement does not lead to viable solutions.

[illegible] Director
Lisa M. Colautti, Director
Erika Lloyd McElligott, Staff Attorney
Adoption Legal Services Project
Pittsburgh

In her examination of a website promoting adoption, Peggy J. Farber rightly questions the wisdom of selecting children like the latest books from Amazon.com. But in so doing she voices many common misconceptions about abused and neglected children.

I am troubled by her apparent belief that these children would be better [illegible] with their parents. Before terminati[illegible] parental rights, courts must prove th[illegible] parents have been given every oppo[illegible] tunity to address their deficiencies [illegible] parents. The burden is on the state [illegible] prove why the children should not b[illegible] reunited with their parents. To follo[illegible] Farber's argument would result in chi[illegible] dren being left without permaner[illegible] homes, which would only exacerbat[illegible] the damage caused by abusive and ne[illegible] glectful parents.

Farber suggests that because chi[illegible] dren are removed for neglect they a[illegible] removed unnecessarily. Children d[illegible] not come into state custody becaus[illegible] they have been left "unattended for [illegible] few hours" or because their home [illegible] dirty. There are simply not enough fo[illegible] ter homes to care for the millions [illegible] children in those circumstances.

Although Farber is correct to ob[illegible] serve that most children in the child[illegible] welfare system come from poor familie[illegible] the solution is to address the problem[illegible] of poverty as well as violence, substanc[illegible] abuse, and incompetent parentin[illegible] while at the same time protecting chil[illegible] dren. It is not to perpetuate the cycl[illegible] by allowing children to remain in abu[illegible] sive and neglectful environments.

Kathleen Lee
Arcata, Calif.

Peggy J. Farber responds:

It is simply not the case that children enter and stay in foster care only because of serious neglect or abuse, as the attorneys of Adoption Legal Services and Kathleen Lee argue. I agree that there are many cases of severe neglect that require the removal of children from their homes. But there are also many mistakes; sloppy investigations, public pressure in the wake of a child's death, a dearth of adequate mental-health and drug-treatment programs all lead to the unnecessary removal of children. (I agree with Lee's assessment that we lack the proper programs to address the problems of poverty.)

Unfortunately, once children are in foster care, it is nearly impossible for parents to get them out quickly. Child-welfare systems in the United States protect themselves against new mistakes by setting the bar for return of

Continued on page 90









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NOTEBOOK

The boys next door

By Lewis H. Lapham

But that was in another country, and besides, the wench is dead.

Christopher Marlowe

Just as NBC during the last years of the Clinton Administration refurbished the morally threadbare White House with the contrivances of *The West Wing*, CBS next autumn will present *The Agency*, a prime-time dramatic series intended to repair and improve the public understanding of the CIA. The producers set themselves an ambitious task. The Agency's reputation for chronic stupidity and criminal incompetence is long established and well deserved. Taken unawares by the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 and by the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, the Agency wrongly assessed (or falsely estimated) the strength and resolve of the enemy during the entire twenty years of the Vietnam War, was surprised by the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1978, not only failed to anticipate but also refused to acknowledge the collapse of the Soviet Union's Communist empire in 1989. When not making mistakes with its map overlays and geopolitical analysis, the Agency for the last fifty years has busied itself with lying to the United States Congress, presidential panels, political assassination, running surveillance on 1.5 million American citizens deemed subversive and/or undesirable, embracing the joys of paranoid fantasy and imbecile conspiracy theory, stalling congressional investigations, burying itself in mountains of bureaucratic rubble and intellectual [illegible] of Washington, and thus a project demanding every measure of the image-maker's art to furnish it with the conventional [illegible]

April at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia, and, judging by the report in the *New York Times*, it took place in an atmosphere as sunny and warm as a Boy Scout picnic. The paper's correspondent remarked on the enthusiastic spirit of collaboration, the director setting up location shots of the building and grounds, low-ranking CIA operatives (among them "a fresh-faced twenty-nine-year-old woman with long black hair, dressed in a well-cut black suit") happy to play their parts as extras, actors walking briskly back and forth through the security checkpoints, the technical crew granted clearance to the gift shop to buy baseball caps embroidered with the Agency's insignia, the cameras moving around under the supervision of Chase Brandon, the public-affairs officer in charge of distributing the propaganda. Presented as a smiling man on whose authority a reader could rely, Brandon was quoted as saying: "This is such a different place than what it used to be. We've got a store and a fine arts commission and a museum. We've really become more, well, normal in our daily course of events as we continue to remain what we are, a secret intelligence organization helping policy makers and military planners [illegible]"

The *Times* reporter noticed nothing in the statement or the scene conducive to the tone of irony; neither did the several journalists in New York to whom I mentioned the filming as a virtuoso performance in the theater of the absurd. They thought the joke was old, at least ten years behind the times. Maybe as late as 1990 a few colleges still prohibited the CIA's recruitment of students on their campuses, and the Agency's misadventures in Nicaragua and Iran were still fresh enough in the public mind to warrant suspicion of both its character and motives. The discovery of a Soviet mole under the lawn at Langley in 1994 led to congressional investigations in both the Senate and the House, and after listening to the testimony about how Aldrich Ames for nine years had been selling important American secrets to Moscow without arousing the least suspicion among his colleagues—despite Ames's heavy drinking and sudden possession of inexplicably large sums of money—the politicians briefly considered dismantling the Agency.

But that was then, and this was now, and hadn't I noticed that the best opinion in Washington favored the notion of the United States dressed up in the costume of the Roman Empire? What else did I expect? A proper empire requires the presence of barbarians on the frontiers, and as proof of the need for fanciful weapons programs, the Bush Administration was promoting a revival of the atmospherics of the Cold War. Let the United States once again be threatened by monstrous enemies—rogue states, starving mobs, Arab terrorists, deadly chemicals, treacherous Chinese—and the prime-time television audience deserves to know that standing watch on the ramparts of freedom we have a lot more people in this country as steadfast as Allison Janney and Martin Sheen.

Long ago and in another country, I could have written an appropriately swell and heartwarming script. In the autumn of 1957, a year out of college and recently returned to the United States after several months in Europe, I applied for work at the *Washington Post*, the White House, and the CIA. Dwight Eisenhower was president, the Communist hordes were at the gates of Western Europe, and the murderous farce in Vietnam hadn't yet divided

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the country into camps of opposing virtue. The Cold War offered the promise of high adventure, and the nation's newly commissioned intelligence service attracted idealistic young men eager to leave at once, preferably at night and under an assumed name, on the next train for Berlin.

The written and physical examinations occupied the better part of a week, and then, after a discreet interval of administrative silence, I was summoned to an interview with five operatives in their late twenties, all of them graduates of Yale and not unlike President George W. Bush in their appearance and manner. The interview took place in one of the Quonset huts near the Lincoln Memorial that had served as the Agency's temporary headquarters during World War II. The military design of a building hastily assembled for an urgent purpose imparted an air of understated glory, an effect consciously reflected in the studied carelessness of the young men asking the questions. Very pleased with themselves but trying not to be too obvious about it, they exchanged knowing references to "that damned thing in Laos" and allowed me to understand that we were talking about the Varsity Team, the Big Game, the Right Stuff.

Prepared for nothing less, I had spent the days prior to the interview memorizing the events of the Bolshevik Revolution, the sequence of the Hapsburg emperors, the geography of Alsace-Lorraine. None of the study was of any use. Instead of being encouraged to discuss the treaties of Brest-Litovsk or name the four roads through the forest of the Ardennes, I was asked three questions bearing on my social qualifications for admission into what the young men across the table clearly regarded as the best fraternity on the campus of the freedom-loving world:

1. When standing on the thirteenth tee at the National Golf Links in Southampton, which club does one use from the lie?

2. On sailing into Hay Harbor on Fishers Island, what is the direction of the prevailing wind?

3. Does Muffy Hamilton wear a slip? [illegible]

I answered correctly, but Muffy Hamilton [illegible]. In the middle 1950s she was a glamorous figure on the Ivy League weekend circuit, very beautiful and very rich, much admired for the indiscriminate fervor of her sexual enthusiasms. At Williams on a winter weekend I had seen her dancing on a table, and once upon a time at the Fence Club in New Haven I had handed her a bottle of brandy with a glass of milk. About the mysteries of her underwear my knowledge was secondhand, my sources compromised, my information limited to a rumor of Belgian lace.

The three questions, however, put an end to my interest in the CIA. The complacence of my examiners was as smooth as their matching silk handkerchiefs and ties, and when I excused myself from the rest of the interview (apologizing for having misread the job description and wasted everybody's time) I remember being frightened by the presence of so much self-congratulation crowded into so small a room. As arrogant as they were vain, invincibly certain of their moral and intellectual primogeniture, the members of the credentials committee ordained by God and Yale basked in the sun of omniscience, and from that day forward I've never questioned the Agency's talent for making a mess of almost any operation that it condescended to undertake. Nor have I been surprised by the Agency's buffoonery and vindictiveness. Once disabused of the dream of power, nobody becomes more spiteful than the boy next door jilted by the beautiful Asian girl to whom he has given the beach house at Cam Ranh Bay, $100 million in helicopters, and God knows how many tons of high explosive.

The first few seasons of derring-do gave everybody reason to believe that the game might prove to be exciting, successful, and fun. Congress voted abundant supplies of money for which it demanded no accounting, and foreign agents in the 1950s sold at bargain prices, sometimes for as little as a bar of chocolate or a carton of cigarettes. The Agency recruited émigré armies to recapture the lost kingdoms of Poland, Bulgaria, and the Ukraine; assisted with the removal of governments thought to be inconvenient in Iran, Guatemala, and the Philippines; conducted experiments (in Asia and Latin America) with the trade crafts of extortion, bribery, and torture.

Within a very few years the victories proved to be illusory, or, at best, ambiguous. Advance scouts for the émigré armies parachuted into the Slavic darkness and were never seen or heard from again. By overthrowing the popular but socialist regime in Iran (at the behest of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company) the United States opened the way first to the repressive tyranny of the Shah of Shahs and then to the revolutionary zeal of the Ayatollah Khomeini. The forced departure of Jacobo Arbenz from Guatemala (because his form of democratic socialism offended the United Fruit Company) allowed for the arrival of a notably vicious military junta, and in the Philippines the outfitting of Ramón Magsaysay with anti-Communist propaganda served as prelude to the corrupt regime of Ferdinand Marcos. Four American presidents borrowed the CIA's methodology to define the expedition in Vietnam as a prolonged covert action. Aware of the inconsistency between the doctrine of clandestine war and the constitutional principles of a supposedly free and open society, they were forced to systematically lie about the reason for our presence in the country, and as a result of our efforts to teach the world the lessons of democracy we taught a generation of American citizens to think of their own government as an oriental despotism.

Nothing in the public record suggests that the Agency during the last thirty-odd years has picked up on the news that the Statue of Liberty cannot be made to stand on the pedestal of criminal violence. The patrol boats sink, the guerrillas get lost in the mountains, somebody blows up the bus terminal instead of the radio station. Consider the bungled invasion at the Bay of Pigs, where, without the least hint of a plausible reason, the CIA expected a crowd of Cuban peasants to rise from the sugarcane and march gloriously to Havana while singing Broadway show tunes. Marvel at the subtlety of the Agency's plot to remove Sukarno as the president of Indonesia—by releasing to theater audiences in Jakarta a propaganda film entitled *Happy Days* that purportedly

s wed Sukarno (played by a Mexi
c tractor wearing a mask) in bed with
a soviet agent (played by a California
a ress wearing a wig). Dwell briefly
the comedy of what in 1986–87
s billed as the Iran/Contra affair—
e Agency thinking to sell an arms-
f -hostages deal to the mullahs in
heran by offering the gifts of a Bible
d a cake, depositing $10 million in
e wrong Swiss bank account, hiring
mken aircraft mechanics in El Sal-
dor, and dropping munitions into
e wrong jungles in Nicaragua. Pass
htly over the fact that prior to the
lt War in 1991 the Agency contin
ntly informed the Pentagon that
ddam Hussein meant to attack Sau-
Arabia, not Kuwait.

But as demonstrated most recently
the Agency's accidental targeting
the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade
e., "helping policy makers and mili-
ry planners carry out their mission")
e boys next door learn nothing from
eir mistakes. Their vanity remains
ndsomely intact, and so does their
pe of solving, maybe this year or
ext in the mountains of Colombia,
e mysteries of cocaine smuggling,
oney laundering, and Muffy Hamil-
n's underwear. Although I can un-
erstand how it might be possible to ad-
ire their persistence, I don't know
hy we continue to give them money,
d when I notice that in the current
scal year the Agency has submitted a
udget request for $30 billion, I re-
ember that in John le Carré's novel
inker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy, an old con-
oisseur of the world's secrets tells an
pprentice espionage agent that their
est information—acquired at large ex-
ense and with heavy loss of human
fe—is probably false. The ancient spy
oses his judgment as a question: "Ever
ought a fake picture, Toby? The more
ou pay for it, the less inclined you are
doubt its authenticity."

An agent in the British Foreign Ser-
ice before becoming a novelist, Le
Carré understood that covert actions
sually took place at the not-very-im-
ortant margins of not-very-important
vents, and that when extended over
period of more than four days they
ide nothing from anybody except the
eople paying the bills. He also un-
erstood that the "magic formulae and
ocus-pocus of the spy world" recom-
mend themselves to "declining pow-
ers," to men and institutions losing
their strength and becoming tearful of
shadows. "When the king is dying,"
he said, "the charlatans rush in."

So do the soap-opera stars, the make-
up artists, the sound crews wearing em-
broidered baseball caps. The *Times* cor-
respondent introduced them as people
who had come to help, happy to tell up-
lifting stories and not inclined to sar-
casm. Michael Beckner, the principal
writer for the series, described it in al-
most the same words as those deployed
by Chase Brandon—"less 'Mission Im-
possible' and more about the families
and lifestyles and personal day to day
lives of the men and women of the
CIA." The remark suggests that we can
rely on CBS to make sure that every
covert operation and all the secondary
plots work the way they are supposed to
work—each week before the last com-
mercial a bomb defused, a terrorist cap-
tured, a city rescued from bubonic
plague. But more importantly, in the
foreground of the episode we'll meet
the fragile human beings (single moth-
ers, caring fathers, recovering alco-
holics, etc.) going about their daily
rounds between the gift shop and the
pistol range, and as we learn to love
them all, each and every one, we'll
come to know that America is de-
fended, if not in fact at least in fiction,
by an engagingly dysfunctional family
of patriots who remain capable (de-
spite the distractions of lost dogs and
extramarital love affairs) of reading a
satellite photograph and finding their
way through Bulgarian customs.

The producers can expect the critics
to be kind; certainly they can trust the
network to inject promotional spots
into the news broadcasts prepared for
Dan Rather and Mike Wallace.
Change a few names on the Tele-
PrompTer—last week in Kabul instead
of this week in Dar es Salaam—and
the two reels of virtual reality become
reassuringly indistinguishable. Whether
packaged as news or entertainment,
the sale and distribution of govern-
ment propaganda no longer provoke
quibbles of dissent. The official spokes-
men hand out the press releases; the
baseball caps from NBC and CBS wrap
them up in cellophane as good-luck
charms meant to ward off evil spirits
shrieking in a foreign wind. ■



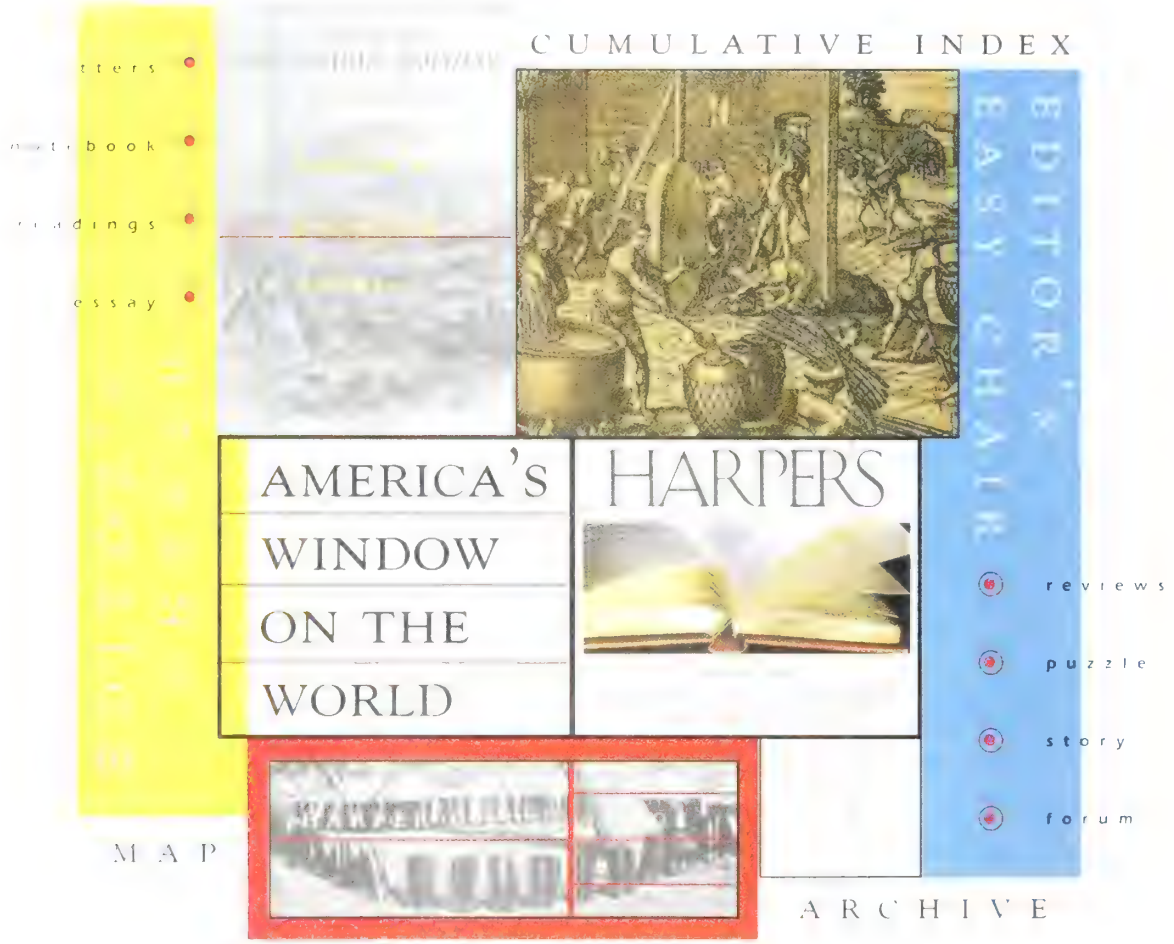

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Estimated cost of fuel consumed in 1999 by U.S. drivers caught in traffic delays : $8,600,000,000
Amount by which the combined profits of the world's top ten oil companies in 2000 exceeded those in 1999 : $29,000,000,000
"Signing bonus" that two oil companies paid Chad in April 2000 in order to join an oil-exploration project : $25,000,000
Amount of this bonus that Chad spent on weapons, violating an International Monetary Fund agreement : $4,500,000
Minimum number of people who have been trampled to death at soccer matches in Africa since April : 177
Number of U.S. major-league baseball players this year who are natives of the Dominican Republic : 79
Ratio of their combined salaries to the Dominican Republic's military expenditures last year : 2:3
Factor by which the number of Catholics in Latin America exceeds the number in Italy : 8
Number of Catholic cardinals from Latin America and Italy, respectively : 32, 40
Percentage of Americans who would allow "churches and other houses of worship" to seek federal funds for charitable work : 75
Percentage who would allow "Muslim mosques" to do so : 38
Chances that an episode of *The Simpsons* contains at least one religious reference : 7 in 10
Percentage of CPR attempts depicted on television that save the patient's life : 67
Percentage in real life that do : 15
Percentage of Americans who believe they have never eaten genetically modified food : 70
Chance that a processed food in a U.S. grocery store contains genetically modified ingredients : 1 in 2
Chance that a commercial multivitamin does not contain the vitamin levels promised on its packaging : 1 in 3
Estimated percentage of Tibetan children whose growth has been stunted by malnutrition : 50
Change, in inches, in the average height of a Japanese eleven-year-old since 1950 : +6
Rank of cancer and suicide, respectively, among the top causes of death of Japanese bureaucrats last year : 1, 2
Chance that a case of cancer diagnosed in the U.S. last year was a skin cancer : 1 in 2
Chance that an American will develop skin cancer in his or her lifetime : 1 in 5
Number of nudist clubs, resorts, and campgrounds in the U.S. : 233
Average monthly viewership of NakedNews.com, a Canadian website whose anchors strip while reading the news : 6,000,000
Number of Russian news organizations that were sent a press release in February touting a fake company : 21
Number that offered to run an article about the company for a fee : 13
Estimated percentage of Mexico's thirty major newspapers that would fold without government subsidies : 90
Chances that a body of water in Mexico is too contaminated to swim in : 3 in 4
Factor by which radiation-dose levels found in the Library of Congress exceed typical levels outside a nuclear plant : 260
Number of Coca-Cola commercials that the company contributed to the Library of Congress last November : 20,000
Percentage change in the size of Colombia's coca crop since its "Plan Colombia" coca-eradication campaign began in 1999 : +11
Ratio of the total amount the U.S. spent on the Gulf War to the amount it spent last year on the drug war : 2:5
Percentage of George W. Bush's first 189 appointees who also served in his father's administration : 42
Number of the sixteen previous Republican presidents who experienced a recession during their first term in office : 15
Days after Dow Jones laid off 202 workers that its CEO published a scathing review of his Caribbean vacation : 1
Number of General Electric employees who have the title "chief executive officer" : 51
Average amount that workers in one El Salvador factory are paid for each $12.99 Gap T-shirt they sew : 11.6¢
Percentage of Americans living below the poverty line who believe that "poor people today have it easy" : 31
Percentage change, since January, in the stock price of 99¢ Only Stores : +65

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of May 2001. Sources are listed on page 87
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READINGS

[Essay]

ALONG THIS RUTTED PATH

From "Letter to Jerzy Andrzejewski," a previously untranslated essay by Czeslaw Milosz, rendered into English by Madeline G. Levine. The complete text, which was written in 1942, appears in To Begin Where I Am: Selected Essays, *edited by Bogdana Carpenter and Madeline G. Levine, to be published in October by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.*

Dear Jerzy,

Doubt is a notable thing. I believe that if there were a recurrence of the biblical experience of Sodom, it would be necessary to seek the righteous among those who protest—both rather than among believers. And yet, as you know, doubt is traditionally hated and persecuted; mistrusted solely because it serves the seekers of truth as a weapon. Indeed, the most fervent people are doubters. Allow me, then, to take both sides, and do not think that when I speak as one who knows with certainty that I do not also doubt; do not think, either, that when I doubt I am not also sensing right beside me, close enough to touch them, definite, indisputable things. Just as human sight is capable of taking in only one side of an apple, human speech cannot encompass any phenomenon in its total roundness. The other side always remains in shadow. You summon me to assist in the struggle against armies of the most varied moral laws, armies equipped with swastikas, hammers and sickles, portable shrines, banners. Each of them insists that only its system of values is salutary, appropriate, useful. Each of them rushes around the world, exhorting people to join its ranks. Looking at this variety of mutually contradictory laws, you ask what it is that could convince you that your [illegible] You ask, won't this stage be subject to constant change in response to [illegible] tions, to a person's origins and upbringing, and, if that is the case, are there not only [illegible] that function as the most universal and lasting standard by which the currents and ideas creating contemporary history should be measured?

[illegible] vague [illegible] existence. All it takes is to raise one human generation in a new, changed way, instructing them in a different good and a different evil, and what a decent man is to world [illegible] indignation will elicit universal praise. The elasticity of human nature appears to have no limits; indeed, our own age is an age of monstrous experiences that prove this alleged truth clearly and persuasively.

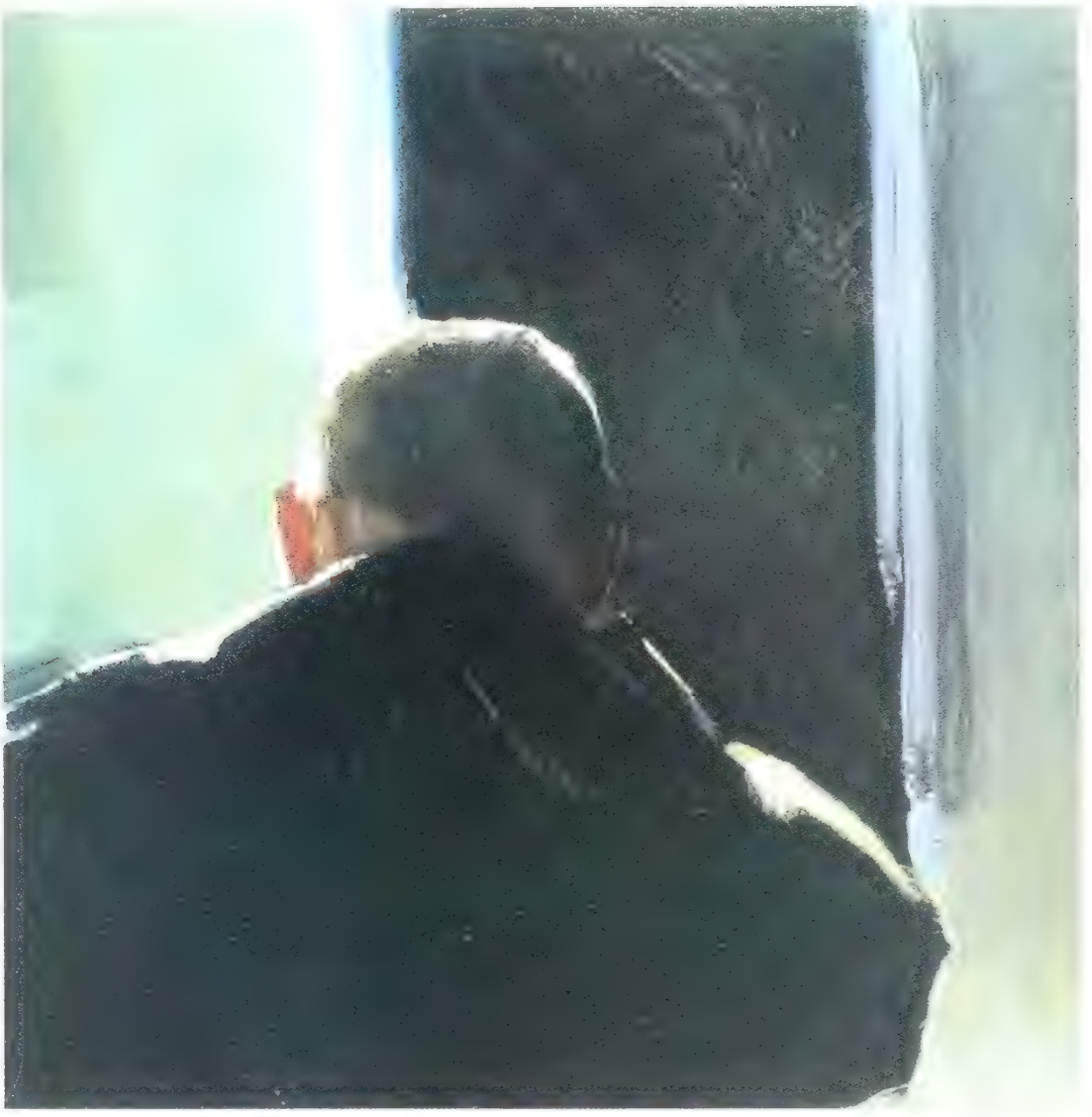
But still I must console you. Attempting to appeal to that nebulous element, the kernel of common sense in man, is nothing new by any means; it is not like the discovery of a new continent [illegible] or, at any rate, as old as culture that can be traced [illegible] known by a great variety of names throughout history. Dependent [illegible]

[illegible], common sense, the categorical imperative, the moral instinct. And although different faiths and different laws prevailed, enforced by the might of the sword, more than one Socrates drank poison in the name of that vague, wondrously indefinable voice, more than one humanist was burned at the stake. Only yesterday, Aldous Huxley, whose *Jesting Pilate* is such depressing, impolite reading (since it reveals the weakness of the West), that skeptical Huxley [illegible] and the world in search of verities, and on this summary of the results of his journey I encounter that although almost all his convictions were demolished as a consequence of his contact with the immense variety of human beliefs, passions, and customs, still he was able to preserve one conviction. That one conviction was his belief in the similarity of human nature, irrespective of race, religion, and language, his belief in the identical moral sense and similar definition of good and evil, be it in Europe or China, or the Polynesian islands. Could it be that people like Huxley were the last, unworthy heirs of the European tradition? Could it be that their judgment was the last of the old world's delusions, a weak and deformed reflection of the final wave of humanism, and that in that case one ought to look at the extermination of people in camps, in prisons, with new eyes—look at it as a battle between red ants and black ants, without recognizing either the one or the other as in the right but, rather, granting that both species are right? Or perhaps we should instead admit that some human right, some fulfillment of moral law, belongs to one side, and that their persecutors do not share that right. But if we take that position, we return to the vague kernel of ethical intuition; verily, that is not something that has long since been put to rest, that should have been consigned by now to oblivion.

At this point in my argument, I am overcome with shame. How my head in sorrow over my own tendencies, which prod me toward a greater zealousness than I desire. It is enough for me to loosen the reins a bit, and I begin to pontificate in the [illegible]. Knowing how easily I lapse into exaltation, I fear that I will soon mention the devil who summons people to mass by ringing his tail. I have very few qualifications to be a bard. So let us quickly extinguish exaltation with renewed doubt; let us return to bitter [illegible].

Over the last few years, observing the spectacle in which we all are also actors, I have been astonished—no less, I am sure, than you—by the [illegible] human nature. That mores can [illegible] completely the [illegible] his property, of his family, his beloved profession, is not what I find most astonishing. That he grows accustomed to hunger, cold, to being beaten about the face and kicked, also fits within the boundaries of the understandable. But beyond that stretches a dark expanse of wonders, as yet unsuspected perspectives. Let us take the question of one's relationship to death. In so-called normal times (and perhaps ours actually are normal) death is surrounded by a ritual of magic gestures, incantations, and rites. The smell of death makes the neck hair of animals stand on end, but humankind drowns out the terror with the beating of tom-toms, the sound of organs, and the singing of mournful songs. Until recently, in Belorussia women mourners still keened over fresh graves. These rites give death the character of a singular event, the appearance of a phenomenon that disturbs the natural order; they make of death an event that is utterly specific, seemingly unrepeatable. As far as I can recall from my reading of the scholarly literature on this matter, the idea that death is inevitable is alien to primitive tribes—they ascribe death, if it is not the result of being eaten by wild beasts or being killed during warfare, to the influence of evil spells. Perhaps this, too, testifies to a ceremonious attitude toward death (if I may call it that). It is a different matter when, as today, new ideas are being born—for example, the idea of the mass extermination of people, akin to the extermination of bedbugs or flies. There is no longer any place for ceremoniousness. After a while these striking changes penetrate the psyche of the masses, who daily confront this phenomenon. A person lived, spoke, thought, felt. Then the next day he's gone. Death makes no more of an impression than the drowning of an ant makes on its comrades parading beside it on the tabletop. A certain insectivity of life and death, as I'd like to call it, is created. I suspect that we are beginning to look at man partly as a living piece of meat with tufts of hair on his head and his sexual organs, partly as an amusing toy that speaks, moves—but all one has to do is raise one's hand and squeeze the trigger and an ordinary object is lying in the same place, as inert as wood and stone. Who knows, perhaps this is the path to absolute indifference, including indifference to one's own death. It may happen that with good training and appropriate schooling people will die easily, from a lack of desire; they will treat dying as almost an everyday activity, between two shots of vodka and a cigarette they won't get to smoke.

In any event, this will certainly lead to indifference to the death of others and to a change in the classification of murder as an ugly deed. Causing someone's death is dissociated from the reek of demonism, pangs of conscience, and similar accessories of Shakespearean drama. Young men in perfectly clean uniforms can then shoot people while gnawing on a ham sandwich. Yet another



[illegible] law [illegible] parallelling the ethical feeling of civilized societies, has linked punishment to the fact of guilt. Because X [illegible] bars. Today, the issue of guilt is fading into the background, and how pernicious or dispensable [illegible] has emerged in the foreground. X dies, even though he did nothing bad; he dies because his hair color, the shape of his nose, or his parents' [illegible] pernicious.

Down the road lie unequal rights and unequal [illegible] democracies of the West have held to the conviction that all people [illegible] should be judged according to the same principles—which in practice came down to a glaring inequality, depending on the amount of property people owned. The Middle Ages knew a strict caste system, which was gradually tempered by modern mores. The murder of a knight was not [illegible] peasant, though genuine religiosity placed certain limitations on that disparity. In Sparta, as Taine reports, youths who trained for battle in camps would come out onto the roads at night in order to kill a couple of late-returning helots from time to time, for the experience and to prove [illegible]

T[illegible]

CHAINS OF BEING

nineteenth century are not particularly binding

everything, we must include among them results

dent thinking, and it turned out that people can

The question can also arise whether with the de-

munication—as radio, film, and the daily press,

freedom of thought is possible at all. Does this not

me in constant infection with whatever ideas are

in circulation, and even that when the masses are

given ostensible freedom they may succumb to to-

Evidently, human plasticity is great, and the

search for constants, for an "eternal man," might

turn out to be a risky undertaking. It does not

seem to me, however, that this plasticity is lim-

itless. It gives one pause that even the most in-

compatible moral-political systems appeal to the

same elements in man and, independently of

the various forms assumed by whatever ethical

currents are in circulation, they make use of a

similar ethical judgment. The call to heroism

and sacrifice, whether in the name of the Ger-

man people or the socialist fatherland of the

working people, incorporates a scheme that is in

no way different from the praise of patriotism

and masculine courage in Plato's time. The prop-

aganda of the various fascisms rolls out images of

a "new order" in which, in contradistinction to

the former democratic lack of order, people will

be able to live happily, without fear of unem-

ployment, wars, and economic pressure, that

product of "Judeo-plutocracy." The working

have better conditions than in societies based on

respect for money, and participation in the uni-

versal well-being and harmony will be shared

among the people according to their

T

soldiers faith in a "just cause," and the torture and

execution of "worse" peoples has been given an

nothing

tual sense of what ought to be—a perverse appeal,

although from time to time in the speeches of fas-

cist men of state an open confession of crime can

veins, the majority of their statements are lies, sen-

timental appeals to God to bestow His blessings,

and the rending of garments over the other side's lack of morality. This demonstrates that Machiavelli's prescription is immortal and that a ruler would be acting badly if he appealed exclusively to man's basest urges. On the contrary, while doing evil he must robe himself in the toga of a benefactor of humanity, a savior, one who exacts vengeance for injuries—a precept that today's pupils of Machiavelli are following quite faithfully on the whole. Yes, yes, this is all as old as the earth, this is all known, and undoubtedly only the absence of a necessary distance places in our mouths a sentence about man's total plasticity, the total novelty of what is being played out in front of our eyes.

Since we agree that even in the seemingly most predatory armies and programs an elementary ethical sense is surrounded with a certain degree of deference, we confront another problem. That same ethical scheme, that same sympathy for the good and disinclination toward evil, leads to such varied deeds and is filled with such varied contents!

The hierarchy of ethical values is easily overturned and its ranks reassembled. And just as the germ of monarchism and totalitarianism persists within democracy, so a germ of slavery persists in appeals to complete freedom of conscience and thought. Man became free, but being free he created certain historical ideas and bent his neck under the yoke that he himself had created. Soon the idea of self-sufficient humanity took hold. It was contaminated by the corrosive acids of the work of philosophers whose goal it was to prove that "man" is an abstraction, that "Man" with a capital M does not exist, that there are only tribes, classes, various civilizations, various laws and various customs, that history is filled with the struggle of human groups, and that each of them brings along different ethics and a different worldview. Like Marx, they yearned to prove that "being defines consciousness," or, as a young Nazi poet has written, that "the Creator placed life above law." On the heels of this came the necessity to replace the idea of one's fellow man with a narrower idea, the idea of the proletariat or the Aryan, and instead of "do no harm to your fellow man" they began saying "do no harm to your countryman" or "do no harm to a worker."

And now, my dear friend, I shall share with you my greatest doubt. Without religious and metaphysical underpinning, the word "man" is too ambiguous a term, is it not? From the moment it is deprived of traits such as an immortal soul and redemption through Christ, does it not disintegrate into a vast number of possibilities, of which some are better, others worse, some deserving of protection and cultivation, and others of absolute extinction? Finally, is it really possible to invent a single ethics, since the *daimonion*, left to its own resources, turns out to be something like the Pythia? His pronouncements can be interpreted any which way, however one wishes—Mr. Goebbels is well aware of this. I am not comforted in the least by the opinions of writers such as Huxley. Rolling down a steep slope toward valleys inhabited by the wolves of totalitarianism, along with all of Europe, they seem to be unaware of this, and they mistake a brief period of as yet incompletely disrupted equilibrium between freedom and slavery for a permanent state. I am not comforted by allusions to European tradition; her cart has driven more than once along this rutted path, but she has forgotten the dark moments of the past.

[Conspiracy]

THE TRUTH IS OUT THERE

The following memorandum was signed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and [illegible] Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara on March 13, 1962. The memo recommends that "Operation Northwoods," the code name for the plan it details, be implemented within the "next few months." Portions of the memo were printed in Body of Secrets: Anatomy of the Ultra-Secret National Security Agency, *by James Bamford, published this spring by Doubleday.*

Regarding the [illegible] operations, subject: "Operation MONGOOSE," which requested brief but precise description of pretexts which would provide justification for U.S. military intervention in Cuba.

This plan would enable a logical buildup of incidents to be combined with other seemingly unrelated events to camouflage the ultimate objective and create the necessary impression of Cuban rashness and irresponsibility on a large scale. The desired result would be to place the United States in the apparent position of suffering defensible grievances from a rash and irresponsible Cuban government and to develop an international image of a Cuban threat to peace in the Western Hemisphere.

1. Since it would seem desirable to use legitimate provocation as the basis for U.S. military intervention in Cuba, a cover and deception plan could be executed as an initial effort to provoke Cuban reactions. Harassment plus deceptive actions to convince the Cubans of an imminent invasion would be emphasized.

2. A series of well-coordinated incidents will





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Chicago's Community Kitchens is a program of the Greater Chicago Food



"Las Angelas del Basturero [Angels of the Dump]," a photograph by Jaap Dekker, was on display last winter in the County Building in Sant

tanamo to give genuine appearance of being done by hostile Cuban forces.

A. Incidents to establish a credible attack

radio.

"over the fence" to stage attack on base.

(3) Capture Cuban (friendly) saboteurs

naphthalene.

duct funerals for mock victims.

B. The United States would respond by executing offensive operations to secure water and power supplies, and destroying artillery and mortar emplacements which threaten the base.

C. Commence large-scale U.S. military operations.

arranged in several forms:

A. We could blow up a U.S. ship in Guantanamo and blame Cuba.

B. We could blow up a drone (unmanned) anywhere in Cuban waters. The United States could follow up with an air/sea rescue operation covered by U.S. fighters to "evacuate" remaining members of the nonexistent crew. Casualty lists in U.S. newspapers would cause a helpful wave of national indignation.

4. We could develop a Communist Cuban terror campaign in the Miami area, in other Florida cities, and even in Washington. The terror campaign could be pointed at Cuban refugees

seeking haven in the United States. We could sink a boatload of Cubans en route to Florida (real or simulated). We could foster attempts on lives of Cuban refugees in the United States even to the extent of wounding in instances to be widely publicized. Exploding a few plastic bombs in carefully chosen spots, the arrest of Cuban agents, and the release of prepared documents substantiating Cuban involvement also would be helpful in projecting the idea of an irresponsible government.

5. A "Cuban-based, Castro-supported" filibuster could be simulated against a neighboring Caribbean nation. We know that Castro is backing subversive efforts clandestinely against Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Nicaragua at present, and possibly others. These efforts can be magnified and additional ones contrived for exposure. "Cuban" B-26- or C-46-type aircraft could make cane-burning raids at night. Soviet Bloc incendiaries could be found. This could be coupled with "Cuban" messages to the Communist underground in the Dominican Republic and "Cuban" shipments of arms which would be found, or intercepted, on the beach.

6. Use of MIG-type aircraft by U.S. pilots could provide additional provocation. Harassment of civil air, attacks on surface shipping, and destruction of U.S. military drone aircraft by MIG-type planes would be useful as complementary actions. A P-86 properly painted would convince air passengers that they saw a Cuban MIG, especially if the pilot of the transport were to announce such a fact. The primary drawback to this suggestion appears to be the security risk inherent in obtaining or modifying an aircraft. However, reasonable copies of the MIG could be produced from U.S. resources in about three months.

7. It is possible to create an incident which will demonstrate convincingly that a Cuban aircraft has attacked and shut down a chartered civil airliner en route from the United States to Jamaica, Guatemala, Panama, or Venezuela. The passengers could be a group of college students off on a holiday or any grouping of persons with a common interest to support chartering a non-scheduled flight.

A. An aircraft at Eglin AFB would be painted and numbered as an exact duplicate of a civil registered aircraft belonging to a CIA proprietary organization in the Miami area. At a designated time the duplicate would be substituted for the actual civil aircraft and would be loaded with the selected passengers, all boarded under carefully prepared aliases. The actual registered aircraft would be converted to a drone.

B. Take-off times of the drone aircraft and the actual will be scheduled to allow a rendezvous south of Florida. From the rendezvous point the passenger-carrying aircraft will descend to minimum altitude and go directly into an auxiliary field at Eglin AFB where arrangements will have been made to evacuate the passengers and return the aircraft to its original status. The drone aircraft meanwhile will continue to fly the flight plan. When over Cuba, the drone will begin transmitting on the international distress frequency a "MAY DAY" message stating he is under attack by Cuban MIG aircraft. The transmission will be interrupted by destruction of the aircraft which will be triggered by radio signal. This will allow ICAO [International Civil Aviation Organization] radio stations in the Western Hemisphere to tell the U.S. what has happened to the aircraft instead of the U.S. trying to "sell" the incident.

[Projections]

THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN

The following messages were among 7,200 submitted last January to [illegible] on a site created by Swiss artist Johannes Gees. Gees arranged to have the messages beamed in fifty-foot-high letters onto a mountain facing the World Economic Forum gathering in Davos. Shortened and [illegible]. About a third of the submissions were beamed.

Wow! hello everyone. hello mr president! how are you over there?

We are watching you. The power of the internet is in the hands of THE PEOPLE.

THE EARTH IS OUR MOTHER

Your Money Comes From Blood and Tears.

Man fools himself. He prays for a long life and dreads an old age: Vietnamese Proverb

LISTEN TO YOUR MOUNTAIN

Today machinery merely helps a few to ride on the backs of millions.

Greed is Death

is this thing on?

what about the dolphins?

Gore supporters. Stop whining! He is.

All my love, I send it through a laser lens. To the nature, the wildy-rabbit, whatever makes sense.

[illegible]

If You Think We Will Allow You To Poison The Planet, You Are In For A Big Surprise.

LOVE NOT MONEY

What in the world does "People over profit" mean? Perfect world is where people benefit when they profit?

do you know how many people died unnatural-[illegible]

In the meadow all the problems can be solved in a day lets all move to the meadow

Mr. Bush, show you are a responsible Republi-[illegible] put some energy in[illegible] now!

do it yourself!!!

Why are many foreign language messages to this laser omitted? Europeans still trying to [illegible] the world[illegible]destiny?

Hmmmmm . . . are we getting somewhere with this discussion?

Capitalism Sucks!

All we are saying is give peace a chance

[illegible]

Why aren't the leaders answering our messages? why do we bother?

[illegible] this laser cause cancer?

I'D LIKE TO BEAM US INTO A FUNNIER TIMES!

If the West is truly democratic, why do we have to write on mountains to be heard?

[illegible]

Stop Landmines

you run the world, we shall revolt

[illegible]

[illegible] round?

Japan, stop whale hunting!

LOVE, PEACE & UNITY

Mr. president, do you know what is the favourite dish of your children?

For Anarchism!!! State ownership/private ownership of property is a lie!!! Against State and Capital!

Happiness is a warm puppy: Charles Schultz

[illegible] hope for peace and prosperity.

Kurt Loves Grace

[illegible]

[illegible]

Globalization made this message possible. Thank you, W.E.F.

LOOK, MA! I'M WRITING STUFF ON A HILL IN SWITZERLAND

I am the walrus

I will miss this laser

[Propaganda]

HORTON HEARS A CHAINSAW

From Truax, *a children's book by Terri Birkett, modeled on Dr. Seuss's* Lorax *and funded by the Hardwood Forest Foundation and the National Oak Flooring Manufacturers Association. Four hundred thousand copies of* Truax *have been distributed to elementary schools nationwide.*

A warm day in June, way out on Oak Knoll,
With my saw and my ax hung up on a pole,
I was fixing a wheel on my Board-Flipping Packer
When I glimpsed what I thought was a Green-crested Quacker.
I looked to the sky. That wasn't a bird.
It looked like a Green-crested man. How absurd!

"Mister!" he yelled with a whiskery wheeze,
"I am Guardbark, protector of trees."
With one squinted eye, he sized up my clothes,
My ax, my saw, and my steel-booted toes.
"Hello, Mr. Guardbark," I said with unease.
And not to be rude, I got off my knees.

He must have been flying for quite a long while,
He seemed kind of sad, so I said with a smile,
"I welcome you here where the Loblolly grows
And the roots of the Shadegrove tickle your toes.
Where the Shrub-bird sings and hums out his nose
And Blue-breasted Barkpeckers peck out the rows
I'm Truax, the logger. I harvest these trees
For ballbats and houses and things such as these."

But before I could shake or offer a seat,
The Guardbark stopped, stiffened, and stamped his Axe-foot.
"Sir!" he said loudly, "you are grisly with greed.
Cutting Hardbarks is MEAN and horribus indeed.
Look what a mess your hacking has made.
You did all of THIS just to get your bills paid?"

"No, not at all," I said with a smile.
"Have a seat on that pile. This might take a while."

"I WON'T take your CHAIN-saw OR your LOOK!"
the Guardbark raved on. He snarled and he shook

"I'm Guardbark, I tell you, keeper of trees.
Our future, you know, is dependent on these.
You must stop this hacking and whacking and
stacking.
You should NOT be here. I MUST send you
packing."

"Whoa, Mr. Guardbark. Just calm down a bit.
Our trees won't be helped by a tumultuous fit.
Let's talk instead. As I've always said—
Talking's much better than losing your head!"

"Okay, we'll talk, you brutish
tree-whacker.
Turn off your saw and your
wood-hacking stacker."



I turned off my saw and my
stacker, and soon
We could hear the shrill call of
the Leafsucking Loon.
Then Guardbark began, "I'm an-
gry all right.
What future is there with no
trees in sight?
Trees clean the air, give Shrub-
birds a rest.
Fuzz-worms and Kitesquirrels use
trees for their nests."



"Oh, Mr. Guardbark, you're
right!" I agreed.
"No trees for the future would be
dreadful indeed.
That's why I carry my bag of tree
seeds,
And my Dirt-Digging Planter to plant them with
speed.
In fact, for every ONE tree that I need,
I plant FIVE food-stowing, tree-growing seeds!"

Guardbark pondered this last bit of news
While chewing his fingernails off by the twos.
"You really plant trees for the trees that you use?
Still—THAT won't remove my Tree-Hacking
blues.

"What about trees that are really quite old,
That are cooling our planet and shouldn't be
sold?
They're cleaning the air. It's really not fair
to cut THEM down for some wobblesome chair."

I realized that Guardbark did not want to know
How the earth keeps on changing, so I spoke sort
of slow,
"With wildfires and wind, insects and disease,
Nature, herself, renews stands of old trees."

I looked at the Guardbark. His mouth turned to
gristle.
His eyes shot some darts. He gave a sharp
whistle.
"But Nature is patient and willing to wait
I want old trees NOW! I'm mad—that's my
fate!"

I agreed with the Guardbark that it always is
good
To save some of the old, historical wood.
Then I gave him the facts, the truth of the
matter.
This Guardbark did NOT want to hear idle
chatter.

"We're teaching our people just how to conserve
And we've set aside land in National Preserves.
(95 million acres, to be quite
precise)
Have been set aside JUST to
look nice.

"Now breathable air—you've got
a point there.
We all need clean air. For that
there's no spare.
But if we examine the scientists'
rule
We see that the planet's clean air
and its cool
Depend on YOUNG trees in
tree-growing school.
That's where they learn how to
use CO
To make lots of oxygen. Really,
it's true!"

I looked at the Guardbark, the
gleam in his eye.
I knew we weren't finished, this
sentry and I.
As soon as that thought was leaving my head,
The Guardbark spoke up and here's what he said:

"BIODIVERSITY. Now there is a word.
A Science-y, Frogbirdy word I have heard."
He thought for a moment and then he went on,
"Will THIS still be there when the trees have
been sawn?"

I like these discussions where views are debated.
So I dug up my facts and quickly I stated,
"BIODIVERSITY, hmmm, let me see.
That word has lots of good meanings for me.

"In each of our forests, critters abound.
Leafsnatchers in treetops, Legbugs aground.
Cutting the trees sends SOME critters running,
But others move in, some cute, and some cunning.
They munch on the leaves. They grow on the
bark,
And none loves it more than the Pink-Spotted
Lark.

"A newly cut forest has sun on the ground
And BIODIVERSITY leaps and abounds."

Then a great thing happened. It made me quite glad.
The Guardbark calmed down. He was no longer mad.
His shoulders relaxed, then he said with a sigh,
"We want the SAME things, Tree-whacker and I?

"[illegible] ENDANGERED species, my friend!
[illegible] keep them from seeing their end!"
He looked quite concerned so I knew he was [illegible]
Being angry at me for the job that I do.

"That's a tough question. It takes lots of thought
To decide what we ought not do, or we ought.
Would anyone mind if we lost, say, a tick
That carried a germ that made Cuddlebears sick?

"Or what about something that's really quite nice
Like the Yellow-Striped Minnow that lives in Lake Zice?
How far will we go? How much will we pay?
To keep a few minnows from dying away?

"Do we ever consider just how it would be
If we could NEVER, EVER again cut a tree?
Would we live in houses made of plastic and steel?
'Til the oil and the ores run out? and they will.

"You know, Mr. Guardbark, I've thought and I've dreamed.
I've fumed and I've steamed. I've figured and schemed.
I want the best future for my little boy.
I want trees to be here, for him to enjoy."

With that, he looked at me straight in the eye.
Then he shook my left hand and took to the sky.

He said, "I am Guardbark, ward of the trees—
And I like the way that you're managing these.

"*And perhaps best of all,*" the Guardbark beamed,
"I [illegible] NEVER spotted [illegible] the's [illegible]

[illegible]

A SMALL MADNESS

From Yonder Stands Your Orphan, *a novel by* [illegible] *published this month by* W[illegible] *and* [illegible] *Press. Mr.* [illegible] *is the author of eleven other books, including* Airships, *a collection of stories, and the novel* Geronimo Rex.

Ulrich lived alone at the lake but now at Christmas he was not lonely.

A bombardier out of England and over Germany for the Eighth Air Force, and a puttering aeronaut ever since, a tinkering veteran (though his only personal flight had been without an engine, some fifty yards during Hurricane Camille in 1969), he had thought science his whole life. But recently, he had erupted in mourning over man's treatment of animals. And without gratitude to them, either, a holocaust without a ceremony! Even primitive Laplanders gave solemn thanks to the animals for their own survival. He could not bear Napoleon's millions of dead horses. Nor could he forgive himself for the random horror he had visited on horses, mules, cows, deer, and smaller creatures during the war.

He had no people, only a son back in Minnesota. He had been solitary a long time, and now another was present in his cottage. Death itself, which had a voice, which called to him not in English but he could hear it clearly, calling, saying, *It is not long, you can feel Me, you know it. You've had plenty of time, plenty. And God knows, your wides of space, over Germany, France, back to England. You killed others before you even had a train of thought. You always wanted to go over and shake hands with those you bombed in the Eighth Air Force, but you chickened, Captain Hypocrite. Besides, how were you going to shake hands with a horse or dog or kitten or lamb, those sad ones who never got to look up and hide, just stood there and had your hell all over them. As if nature didn't eat them up enough.*

Oh you're fat at the long table, stuffed with time, friends, your flat stupid brainstorms. Not long. You're going to shake hands with every dead thing. You recall you were a captain, a flyboy, an assassin's instrument barely beyond pubic. You could neither write a good check nor imagine any bill beyond a twenty. You had never had a decent woman's bare breasts against you. All you had was your dog and your planes and good eyes and baseball. You weren't shit and then your Minnesota yokel's ass made its wings and you commenced gloating over your own worth.

I almost got your blowhard ass again in that hurricane. You knew I was close, as close as your window with those handsome live oaks with their drapes of Spanish moss your retired old stuffed ass had bought into, flat nasty sand and the smell of dead mullet outside the window, that was Me.

Well now you're fat, stubby, your spine packed down by gravity. Got emphysema, struggle about fifty yards without a blackout. I'm in the room, you can walk to me easy. Go ahead, light up another one, might as well make it an old Camel straight like you really want, and hack and hock a spell, walk right into These Old Arms. You know Me, flyboy to aluminum walker, you've known Me. It's always Veteran's Day over here.

For Christmas he mailed his son's family in



Ulrich Luhr, a photograph of the test flight recorded by Sven Wahlroos, [illegible]

Minnesota's Southern Gourmet Forest, ecstatic of unevenness and dry-rotted punky rock-shrimp. The son would fuck at the old farm with a gorgeous and pleasant Swedish wife and blond children, elfin beauties. They loved Ulrich and believed him to be a dear eccentric. Benignly senile, deafened to communication with any but the nearest friends, who whispered in his ear. They were unaware he was a fool who disastrously misconstrued aeronautical possibilities in his dreams of "personal flight." Which is to say, a minimalist backpack and propeller raised above the buttocks of the pilot by titanium struts and powered by a camshaft spun by a featherlight nuclear pack almost invented by a renegade physicist and imprisoned there in Huntsville, Alabama with whom Ulrich was in correspondence. There were problems of torque in free fall and necessary wingspan and even of where to place the rudder. Reversing the prop for brakeage brought also the complication of chewing up the legs, ass, and spine of the pilot.

As much had in fact transpired in Huntsville as Ulrich and the [illegible] upward but more at tree level. The half of the pioneer aeronaut which remained brought a staggering lawsuit against the inventor and his philosophical adviser, Earl L. Ulrich of Redwood, MS. Ulrich believed correctly, [illegible]

Ulrich had not told his son or his pals about the [illegible] which Ulrich, the inventor, and the servant were put after [illegible] room of the courthouse where the Alabama magistrate declared all three rampant idiots who owed the scientific community an apology, and a pledge to vacate themselves from his jurisdiction, a jurisdiction that now included all continental airspace into which they, or, in future hurl a human fuselage, forever. Ulrich rose and began an excursus in rebuttal, citing [illegible] if this project were steaming full ahead despite the [illegible] rectum and main colon gawked on from his

wheelchair, until Ulrich's own lawyer hauled [illegible] and he kneeled weeping in sympathy for them.

He had not told his son he had the emphysema either, or that he continued to smoke seven long ones a day, against the expostulations of his doctor and the crowd who gathered [illegible] He [illegible] believed him to be happy, lucky, ill-misdressed, and a fine old [illegible] [illegible] other [illegible] of his kidney, who kept an eye on him that he should want for nothing. In fact he was poor, pitied, and increasingly avoided. Some feared he was headed for a breakdown, many were concerned that he might be giving a speech and just [illegible] them.

On this last afternoon Ulrich waited in front of the paint and body shop for the boys in the Redwood garage to hammer out a dent in the door panel of his dear old woody wagon, a Ford he boasted he might sell for a little fortune on the West Coast. He had had wonderful trips and thoughts in this car. He waited and smoked, holding to his walker with one hand, enjoying the nippy air. He dreamed of Minnesota, where the breathing would be easier. He thought of freezing at 20,000 feet in a flak-holed and strafed B-17, damned near a flying colander, the .50-caliber shell casings rolling back and forth on the floor beside the head of the waist gunner behind him. Until they landed, he had imagined the boy had been vomiting bullets the whole time. It might be that a small madness lodged with him then. Flakked, then strafed by the first of the German jets in the war. Who was he to live, who was he to have madness, even to speak of madness after the others dead who would give anything to be melancholy just once again? He was old but he had no wisdom. Age bore him no rich fruit or gain, only the stare of inconsolable amazement.

Ulrich watched while an odd vehicle came on toward him. A teenager in camouflage, speckled by acne in the face, rode an all-terrain cart across the front of which was tied a slain deer, its tongue out. The butt of a deer rifle rose from the frame in a hard scabbard behind his seat, handy to his reach. As he motored into the driveway of the shop, Ulrich saw the sparse and nasty whiskers around the boy's mouth. A country girl came out of the garage, a high schooler, with a body worker in overalls, greasy. He held a rubber hammer. The boy on the cart was taken with himself. The deer flung over the hood, head and antlers down, the pink tongue out. Already the boy was spitting and acting as if this was not such an extraordinary deed. A killer with a sneer and a fine machine, that was about it. He spat. He could not help it, he was a stud with his booty.

Ulrich trembled in a sudden revelation. The deer's full unearthly beauty. The punk who had turned it into trash. He was not poor, he was not hungry. He had driven miles to show it off. His bleeding trophy over the greasy pavement.

"Young man! I sense a wrong here." Ulrich left the walker and was soon at the seated boy, his hands around his throat. Squeezing and squeezing to kill him. Choke the punk out of him. The boy could do nothing but claw and moo.

The boy reached back for the butt of his rifle. Nobody had sprung to his aid. Ulrich released one hand and yanked out the rifle before the boy could get [illegible] on it. The boy was very hurt in the throat and his face was only now unbluening. He gasped. A rag doll, he fell to the concrete.

"This is a thirty-thirty all right, and a fine one. You strutting little shit. All this fine equipment. [illegible] Here's [illegible] me."

[illegible]

IF THY DOG OFFEND THEE

[illegible] Deputy [illegible] Dec. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Finley, who was convicted last year on one felony charge of cruelty to animals for killing a poodle named General Lee.

Writer [illegible] Captain McQuaig responded in reference to a suspicious death of a dog. Upon arrival writer spoke with the defendant George Finley. Writer along with Captain McQuaig asked the defendant to explain what happened to dog and also how the dog died. The defendant stated he felt the dog was queer because the dog was humping another dog in the mouth with his penis. The defendant stated [illegible] a black plastic pipe and hit the dog over the [illegible] The defendant stated that his daughter took the dog to the veterinarian. The defendant stated that this was the second time this dog was humping another dog in the mouth and he was very an[illegible] [illegible] order arrest and transported him to the Marion [illegible]

Ulrich beat on the vehicle violently with the gun. Its hood, its lights, its steering rack. The telescope sight flew off, then smaller pieces, and finally the stock split and Ulrich lifting the ruined weapon out into the hard weeds in a yard next to the garage. Next thing, he mounted the vehicle and drove off, over the leg of the hunter. He roared out on the main highway awhile and made a turn for the lake, where they lost sight of him. He took the vehicle into the black deeps of the swampland, where only dogs or another "ATV" could pursue.

The hunter was in a condition beyond amazement. But he muttered, a sort of squall. "Crazy. Who *is* he?"

"That man is old, he's really old," said the body man Ronny. "Man, that was some goofy-ass piece of work. He's off driving your ATV into them swamps, Percy."

"I ain't believing."

"He's done left his old woody wagon right here."

The girl had been giggling, but trying to maintain her mascara and explosive dye job, newly teased, so you witnessed a kind of intermediate chemotherapy effect of the skull.

"What the hell you laughing at?" yelled Percy, holding his throat.

"Look it there. He left his *walker*," she said.

"Damn. The man can't hardly breathe. This is one old sonofabitch which changed his life in fifteen seconds," said Ronny.

"I'll change him," croaked Percy. He spat.

"No you won't," said the girl. She had gotten sad. "You go hunt out that old man, one on one, I bet he'd walk out of them woods with your balls in his hand."

"Who the hell you think you are, Marcine?"

"Sick of this country is what. And all you puffed-up little dicks in it. All cause your daddies were too cheap to buy a good rubber."

"That's enough out of you now, Marcine," said the body man, lifting the rubber hammer as if he might do something with it.

"I'm sick of my name and I'm sick of my hair and sick of pickups and guns and y'all raising dogs to kick and people calling deer sonsofbitches and wanting me to settle down with them in some goddamn trailer home to breed more like them and—"

"Well Big Missy Marcine. If you think you so wasted here why don't you move on up to Vicksburg and sell what you got. I know the man can help you." The body man thought she was his.

"It'd be a step up," she said.

"And don't let the door hit your butt when you leave."

"That's original."

"Did anybody notice I'm hunt-in, I'm-of bed?" whined Percy, still sprawled on the concrete.

[Parables]

ETIQUETTE IN DARK TIMES

From Stories of Mr. Keuner, *by Bertolt Brecht. To be published in English by the Overlook Press by City Lights Books this month. Translated by* Martin Chalmers.

MR. K. AND POETRY

After reading a volume of poetry Mr. K. said: "In ancient Rome, when candidates for public office made their appearance in the Forum, they were not allowed to wear clothes with pockets, so that they could not take any bribes. Likewise, poets should not wear coats or jackets, so that they do not have any verses up their sleeves."

Mr. K. put the following questions: "Every morning my neighbor plays music on a gramophone. Why does he play music? Because he's doing exercises, I've heard. Why is he doing exercises? Because he needs to be strong, I've heard. Why does he need to be strong? He says it's because he must defeat his enemies in the city. Why must he defeat enemies? Because he wants to eat, I've heard." After Mr. K. had heard that his neighbor played music in order to do exercises, did exercises in order to be strong, wanted to be strong in order to kill his enemies, killed his enemies in order to eat, he put his question: "Why does he eat?"

Deep, the student, came to Mr. Keuner, the thinking man, and said: "I want to know the truth."

"Which truth? The truth is well known. Do you want to know the truth about the fish trade? Or about the tax system? If, because they tell you the truth about the fish trade, you no longer pay a high price for their fish, you will never know the truth," said Mr. Keuner.

Mr. K. talked about the bad habit of silently allowing an injustice suffered to eat at one and told the following story: A boy was crying to himself and quietly asked what was wrong. "I had saved two dimes for the movies," said the boy, "when a big lad came and grabbed one from me," and he pointed at a lad who could be seen some distance away. "Did you not shout for help?" asked the man. "I did," said the boy and sobbed a little more loudly. "And didn't anyone hear you?" the man went on, stroking him tenderly. "No," sobbed the boy and looked at the man with new hope. "Because [illegible]





the second dime out of the boy's hand and walked

a hostile attitude to him. "Yes, but only behind my back," said Mr. K. in his defense.

Mr. K. asked people who had horoscopes cast to mention a date in the past to their astrologers, had happened to them. The horoscope must allow the astrologer to more or less discover the secret. Mr. K. had little success with this advice, be- their astrologers about how unfavorable or favorable the stars had been, information that did the latter then said irritably that the stars, of that these could well have been present on the given date. Mr. K. was very surprised and put a fur-

"It is also not clear to me," he said, "why of all heavenly constellations. These powers will surely not simply neglect animals. But what happens when a certain man starts in Aquarius, for example, but has a flea which is a Taurus, and drowns in a river? The flea perhaps drowns with him, though the stars may be favorable to it. I don't like that."

Mr. Keuner said: "I, too, once adopted an aristocratic stance (you know: erect, upright, and proud, head thrown back). I was standing in rising water at the time. I adopted this stance when

Mr. K. attended a meeting and afterward told the following story: In the city of X there is a so-called harumph club, in which it was the annual custom, after partaking of an excellent dinner, to say "harumph" a couple of times. The members of the club were people who found it impossible to keep their opinions to themselves for any length of time but had been forced to learn understood. "I see, however," said Mr. K. shaking his head, "that even this 'harumph' is misunderstood by some, because they assume it means *nothing*."

[Panegyric]

SHALL I COMPARE THEE TO A YELLOW ROSE?

From a series of short speeches by Texas state senators that were delivered last January on the occasion of Republican senator Chris Harris's nomination as president pro tempore of the Texas State Senate. Portions of the remarks were printed in the February 2 issue of The Texas Observer.

SENATOR JANE NELSON: Sometimes it is traditional for the nominator to compare the nominee to some great figure of the past. Being a former English teacher, I thought about comparing Senator Harris to some great literary figure. Jason in Homer's *Odyssey* comes to mind because he was a real tough guy. But in keeping with the times, I thought it might be more appropriate to think in movie terms. And I thought *The Patriot* might be good because Senator Harris certainly loves his country. And I thought *Gladiator* was a distinct possibility because he's someone that I want on my side when I go into battle. And I even thought about Walt Disney's Ferdinand—you know, the bull that had an imposing stature that belied his gentle nature. But the movie that I thought might best capture the essence of Senator Harris's personality is *Miss Congeniality*. And your strength is not in your fist, but your strength is in your heart. Senator Harris, you are a lion with the heart of a teddy bear.

SENATOR JUDITH ZAFFIRINI: Today, as I second the nomination of Chris Harris, I will quote Attila the Hun. Attila the Hun wrote, "When Huns find themselves with a weak leader, they become confused and ineffective. Huns desire to be led well." We are not Huns, we are senators, and we are your friends. Last year on your birthday, I gave you a copy of *Victory Secrets of Attila the Hun*. As you assume your new duties, I will present to you *Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun*. Senator Harris, you will write a better book.

SENATOR FLORENCE SHAPIRO: I want you to know that, as a former high school English teacher, I often told my students, when they wrote themes, to only use clichés sparingly and certainly for emphasis. Well, I'm going to break half of that rule right now, and I am going to talk about clichés extensively, but also still for emphasis. Chris Harris is one of a kind, there's no doubt about that. His bark is much worse than his bite. He is the epitome of the cliché you cannot judge a book by its cover. And the cliché that you can't teach an old dog new tricks. He probably never met a man that he didn't like. Or at least that he never met a man he did like? I'm not sure sometimes. And he certainly personifies the cliché "Walk softly and carry a big stick." Or was it, "Saunter loudly and carry a pack of cigarettes?" Whatever the cliché—don't get me wrong—Chris Harris will tell you how the cow ate the cabbage in no uncertain terms. But most of all, I want you all to know that Chris Harris has a heart as big as all outdoors. And that's no cliché, that is absolute fact. I know that you are up to this task, my friend, for you are your own cliché.

[Essay]

ACCORDIANA

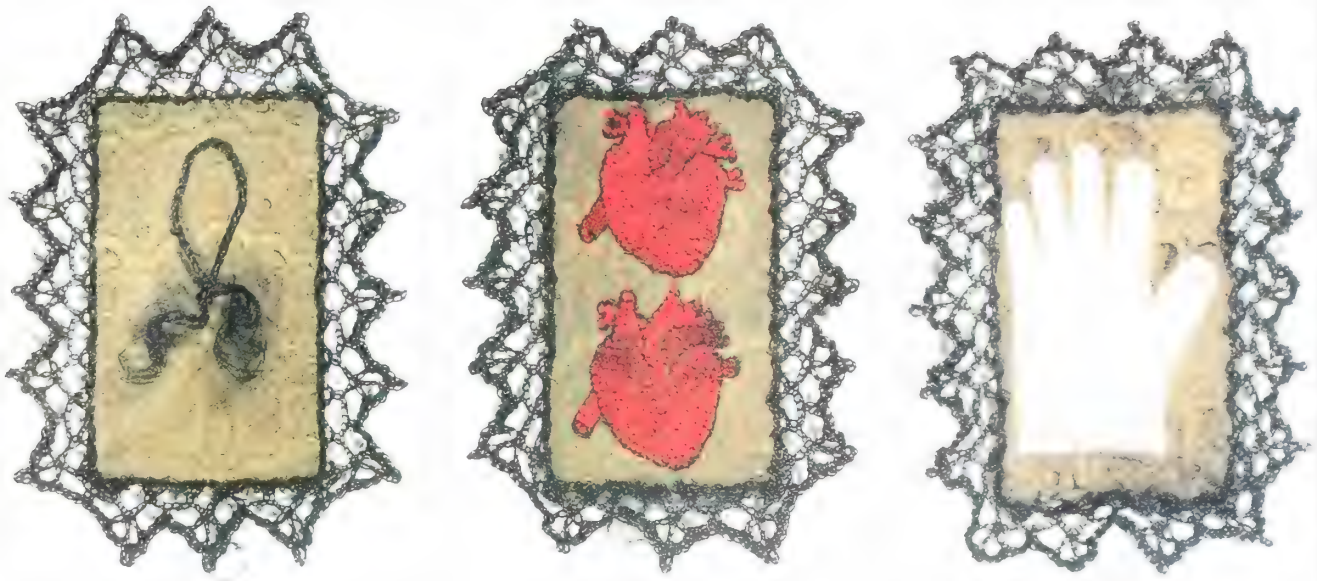
By John Donatich. The essay appeared in the online magazine Feed (www.feedmag.com). John Donatich is the publisher of Basic Books.

I was embarrassed by the accordion once upon a time, taking to heart Robert Musil's quip that a man's capacity to feel deeply is the first sign of his mediocrity. The instrument haunted me with its cloying drama. I played the accordion to ease my parents, to slow the pace of their wandering nostalgia with an object of transition—the instrument of exile: earnest, apparent, simple, nearly completely missing the point. Practicing as a fat, first-generation American kid in the basement of our house in suburban New Jersey, down where we kept the outsize pots and pans, the extra chairs for company, down where we installed the water heater, the boiler, and other noisy overheated things, I thought I could always hear my mother singing behind the accordion's plump absorbent chords whether she was actually there or not.

My uncles sang away summer evenings in the back yard, cycling indiscriminately through a repertoire of songs I knew only by ear, like the Serbo-Croatian I could speak but not read. All of it was intimate and foreign—foreign as home to any boy just noticing the world.

For all its portentousness, the accordion is an instrument of suddenness. Always an intrusion, it can never be smoothly introduced. It asserts itself as a kind of non sequitur. Dolorous and joyous within a turn, it is capable of unadulterated sentimentality. Yet its emotions can't be savored exactly, because they refuse to be modulated or adjusted. The accordion blurts.

Always louder than expected, it is almost always completely literal. Strapped on with a harness, the player is a horse saddled, a mock



Details from "Solitaire," an installation of doilies composed of dirt, lace, synthetic hair, and cotton, by Donna Sharrett. Sharrett's work is currently on display at James Graham & Sons in New York City.

epic, clad in medieval armor, a turtle upturned.

the bellows, mythical as a Chinese parade dragon, utilitarian as a piston. A creature that spreads its wings and contracts, living and dying repeatedly in bathetic pantomime.

Let me be clear that I am talking about the piano accordion (the ones with the keys on it), the

ment. I am not talking about the romance of the Cajun button boxes, chromatic and diatonic button accordions, concertinas, or bandoneons; not reels, romps, tangos, zydeco, polka, classical, conjunto, jive. I'm talking about the "pig organ," what Mark Twain called "the stomach Steinway."

of industrialized economy, supplying ready-made chords. A chord loses all its process in an accordion; the musician cannot weight or color a single note within it. The accessibility of a complex chord with a single touch is a kind of abridgment; the chord is generalized, streamlined, completely consistent within itself. A chord played exactly the same each and every time thereafter.

head. He learns to play the scales literally up and down, north and south, heaven and earth. His chin is as uncomfortable as any violinist's;

the low fidelity of a pre-Renaissance painting. His left hand is virtually invisible to the player, playing music as a blind man reads braille. The left arm, strapped in, heaves the bellows to and fro, muscle-bound. Cognitively, the hands do a cheap magician's trick. It has all the razzle-dazzle of circling one hand around the top of one's head while the other pats the chest in regular rumbs. Virtuosity on the accordion goes only so

transcendent ambitions have no ineffable ache.

While the model of efficiency in one regard, the accordion is also ludicrously laborious. Working the bellows of an accordion is in itself an act of nostalgia; like riding a steamer or kneading dough, it harkens back to a myth of spiritual simplicity but ends up being as pointless as climbing a StairMaster, a mockery of real work.

Other than lederhosen, the single most effective contributor to the accordion's sorry image is its difficulty with volume control. It always sounds louder than it actually is. Cursed by a bombastic rhythmic capability, it is as insistent, affectionate, and personal as

The first sheet music for the accordion appeared in the 1920s, when an ambitious musician could try his hand at, say, Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor. Thus the accordion lost its innocence, graduating from a folk instrument, played by ear, to something you could imagine being played in Carnegie Hall. Pop-music transcriptions would soon follow; my own

collection ranges from "I Loves You Porgy," to "Hey Jude." Recently uncovering a box of sheet music, I was struck by how dated the cover art was, even when judged by contemporary standards. The accordion was doomed to anticipate its own kitschification, its own obsolescence.

A city that celebrates the aesthetics of camp, San Francisco has named the accordion its official musical instrument, and Gay Pride Month shares June with National Accordion Awareness. The City by the Bay manufactured the first U.S.-made piano accordion in 1907. Never the type to bowl alone, accordionists have banded together to form associations in Milwaukee, Peoria, Missoula, Kansas City, Anchorage, Reno, and Mineola.

The year 1970 ushered in an era that was perhaps a low point for the accordion, as it indeed was for so many things. As anomalous as Lawrence Welk, with an affect as flat as his accent, the instrument would itself become the master of ceremonies. The sanitized pop of the champagne cork and drifting bubbles at the start of the show introduced the geriatric impresario of all things celebratory. Who could tell the accordionist from the accordion? While Saturday morning had kids rocking erotically and self-consciously, Sunday evening descended virtuously upon these couples with the values of continuity and repetition. "Oom pah pah. Oom pah pah. That's how it goes." Everyone knows how to dance the polka, as if driven by an artless instinct, as familiar, comforting, and habitual as married sex. The accordion is the middlebrow mascot of the tuxedoed gentleman. Wuhn-er-full, wuhn-er-full.

The eighties rediscovered the accordion as a folk instrument. REM as well as k. d. lang used it with all the ironic confidence of their acronyms and capitalization decisions. Their music laced the accordion through arrangements, shedding its suicidal kitsch delusions, granting it an air of spiritual simplicity. Knocked off center stage, it managed itself as a graceful accompanist, the preferred choice of a knowing, wasp-waisted chanteuse, the museum piece, the instrument emeritus. Its bellows stinking of cabaret smoke, it comforted itself on the black-slacked knee of an unsmiling man, instead of spreading its wings across the broad chest of a polka king.

In a word, it became French again, abandoning its Eastern European frankness. In the same way that the Velvet Revolutions put an end to Polish jokes, the accordion stopped being funny. Accordionists abandoned frenzied arpeggios along with polka-dotted suspenders. Everything would soften and slow down. I have a recording of Satie pieces played on the accordion, and I play this twice a week, trying to hear it, to accustom myself to its cognitive dissonance.

It, the accordion, [illegible] to [illegible] the accordion [illegible] the [illegible] of irony. The accordion, like a recovering alcoholic, its true identity always contingent on its past. How does an earnest instrument earn its irony? How does the goodwill of self-deprecation modulate into the cool of postmodernism? How does something so apparent become knowing? How do the wide-eyed learn to wink?

At a surprise party thrown for my fortieth birthday, friends pressure me to play but I decline. I know from experience that entering a room armed with an accordion causes people to do a double take. There is a moment of startled curiosity, a mild repulsion, then indifference, like discovering and leaving behind a horseshoe crab on a beach. It has all the dismissive humor of a "made you look" prank.

The accordion is anxious to do well; in that way it will always be a symbol of my own first-generation status –burdened by tradition, confused by its own efforts to assimilate. With none of the exoticism of the Andean flute, the Indian sitar, the Australian didgeridoo, the accordion will always be as pedestrian as its wholesome populism, as its own apparent happiness. Indeed, its very derivation is the German word *Akkord*, which means agreement, harmony. The accordion will never assume that great American tradition of false humility, our national defense against humiliation, a grounded fear of all who traffic between the grand and the grandiose.

Likewise, because of its compromised ethnicity, the accordion will never achieve the status of [illegible], it will never become the noble instrument of the tragically disenfranchised. If the accordion were food, it would have to be spaghetti with ketchup and [illegible] with Cheez Whiz, chicken chow mein.

No matter what sort of rehabilitation the accordion undergoes, one memory will always keep. I learned to love it on the day of the arrival of a cousin, named after a wildflower, from a still integrated Yugoslavia. Only a few years older than I, almost in my adolescent years, she had a shape that had a balkanizing effect on me. At a family dinner, she came [illegible] to the party [illegible] I consented to hear me play the accordion. I wanted to play something she would know and, like a sommelier of schmaltz, chose a creamy imported waltz. She rocked slowly side to side, closed her big blue eyes, raised her eyebrows, and smiled a smile so gentle that it slowly, irresistibly flushed her generous cheeks. Thrilled at her swooning, I almost lost my place before I found myself playing by heart. It was then that I learned what an accordion was for. ■

TODAY

TOMORROW

TOYOTA



"The dog ate my alarm clock."

"My long-lost uncle dropped in for tea."

"A squirrel short-circuited the garage door."

There will always be plenty of excuses for not getting to work on time. But in the future, traffic may not be one of them.

In San Diego, Toyota has tested a highway system that helps vehicles automatically maintain a safe distance from each other, regulating traffic flow. And our engineers are also developing on-board computers that monitor traffic congestion, suggest quicker alternative routes — even locate vacant parking spaces.

But that's just the beginning. We won't stop until bumper-to-bumper crawls are a thing of the past. And to those who say that's not possible, we have just one thing to say. Excuses, excuses, excuses.

www.toyota.com/tomorrow

REVENGE

By Steven Millhauser

FRONT HALL

This is the hall. It isn't much of a one, but it does the job. Boots here, umbrellas there. I hate those awful houses, don't you, where the door opens right into the living room. Don't you? It's like being introduced to some man at a party who right away throws his arm around your shoulders. No, give me a little distance, thank you, a little formality. I'm all for the slow buildup, the gradual introduction. Of course you have to imagine it without the bookcase. There isn't a room in the house without



May I take your coat? Oh, I like it. It's perfect. And light as a feather. Wherever did you find it? It's so hard to know what to wear this time of year, warm one day cold the next. I worry about my jonquils. They came out last week and then wouldn't you know it: snow. Luckily it didn't stick. It's a miracle they didn't die. I'll just hang it right here, next to mine. It must look very empty to you, all those hangers side by side. Those are my late husband's hats. Funny. One day I cleared out all the coats, all the shoes and galoshes—it just seemed pointless. But I left the hats. I couldn't touch the hats.

LIVING ROOM

This used to be my favorite room. Listen to me! *Used* to be. But that's the way it is, you know. I don't have a favorite room anymore. Still, I spend most of my time

I'm so glad you like it. One thing we always agreed on, my husband and I, was furniture: it had to be comfortable. As Robert put it, no matter how new it was, it had to look sat in. And of course the piano—what's a living room without a piano, I'd like to know. Not that *I* ever touched it. No, I gave up piano at twelve. Don't know why, really. It's the sort of thing you later think you regret, without really regretting it. But Robert, now. He quit lessons at fifteen but kept on practicing. He never did like to give anything up.

It's a warm room too. When we bought the place it was a little drafty in winter, but first we insulated and then we replaced those drafty old windows that Robert had to put up every fall. Triple-track: it made a difference, let me tell you. When you

close the curtains, in cold weather, it's just as it [illegible] with my feet tucked under, reading, while Robert sat in the chair there, by the bookcase, reading and marking passages. Or we'd talk— [illegible] words, like, I don't know, like a way of breathing. Sometimes he made a fire in the fireplace—excellent draft. I meant to tell you I had the chimney cleaned only last month. Was *that* ever a job. You wouldn't believe what was in there. I almost fell over when I saw the bill. But hey, can you blame the poor guy? Anyway. When the fire was going, I'd move to that end of the couch, to be near it. I could feel the heat all along my right side. Sometimes Robert would go over to the piano, if the mood struck him. He never played for anyone except me. This wasn't exactly as romantic as it sounds. He called himself an *amateur*—harsh word for Robert—said he refused to destroy beautiful things in public. Robert never liked to make mistakes. It upset him. He played for me because he knew I wouldn't mind an occasional wrong note. Or you could say he played for himself and allowed me to overhear him. But I loved to hear him play, especially his Chopin nocturnes. He was crazy about Chopin, said he was the greatest composer—not ever, but of piano music. Second was Mozart. He'd play those Mozart sonatas over and over -every single one of them. Do you know what he'd do? He'd begin with any sonata and play right through the book, in order, till all of a sudden—right in the middle of a movement—the middle of a phrase—he stopped. "That's enough of *that*!" he'd say, as though he were angry at himself, or . . . or disappointed. Robert was hard on himself. You had to know when to soothe him and when to leave him alone. Men are harder on themselves that way than women, don't you think? Or am I wrong? But when he played, he was able to lose himself for a while, in the music. So imagine a fire going- -wood snapping the way it does when it's a little green—the wind rattling the windows behind the curtains—and one of those Chopin melodies that feel like sorrow and ecstasy all mixed together pouring from the keys—and you have my idea of happiness. Or just reading, reading and lamplight, the sound of pages turning. And so you dare to be happy. You do that thing. You dare.

Once upon a time there was a woman—just like me. She grew up in a small New England town, just like me

I hope you don't mind these little . . . anecdotes of mine. We can just breeze on through the house if you'd rather. Then it's all right to [illegible]

Well. I don't want you to think of me sitting on that couch for twenty-two years with a look of blissful idiocy on my face. You know, the adoring wife and the happy hubby. Twenty-two years! That was how long Robert and I were married: twenty-two years. Things are bound to be a little imperfect, in twenty-two years. I met him when I was twenty-four, working in a bookstore in Vermont. Robert was thirty. Even back then he had that gloomy kind of handsomeness that just . . . slayed me. A handsome moody man. Doomed, as he was fond of saying. Difficult, was what it boiled down to. Robert was difficult. But you work your way through. Besides, I was a handful myself, back then. Demanding. Temperamental. Robert was very patient. Impatient with himself and others, patient with me. We . . . fell in love, as they say. And stayed there. That was the thing. And I knew him: God did I know him. I was a student of his expressions, a scholar of his moods. I don't know when it was, exactly, that I felt something was wrong. It was last year—spring was further along, half my forsythias dead. You remember that late frost. I was sitting on the couch with a book, after dinner, and Robert was sitting in his chair, with a book facedown on his leg, thinking. Brooding, you could say. For no particular reason I asked myself: am I happy? And I felt a little pause, a little—oh, breath of hesitation, before I answered: well, yes, of course I'm happy. Of course I am. Happy.

What stayed with me was that blink of hesitation. Robert had been acting a little strange lately. I'd noticed it without noticing it, the way you do. His work wasn't going well again, he was—I mean, all this was nothing new. But there was a new element, something I was suddenly aware of. Robert was very good at giving you his full attention. I've never known anyone who was so good at giving you their full attention that way. He would listen with a kind of . . . a kind of alertness, and whatever he said would be at the center of what you were talking about. I realized that I'd missed this for a while—that his deepest attention was elsewhere. Now, listen. There was no question of unfaithfulness between Robert and me. I knew Robert. It wasn't the sort of thing he *did*. Not that he didn't notice a pretty woman. He *liked* pretty women. He liked *me*, didn't he? Was always talking about how pretty I was and all that; I didn't deny it. And of course women were always noticing him. But noticing's one thing, and Robert . . . it wasn't his way. It just wasn't in the bounds of possibility. Besides, we

re happy. Weren't we? But I found myself inking, on the couch—or not really thinking, it was more like the shadow of a thought: uld it be that Robert . . . ? I immediately felt barrassed, almost . . . ashamed, as if I'd been ught in some unpleasant act. But there it is. The little thought-shadow.

This mantelpiece came with the house. I can ow it to you in the original plan. Solid mar e. Nice, if you like that sort of thing.

Listen. I'll tell you a story.

Once upon a time there was a woman—just ke me. She grew up in a small New England wn, just like me. She was well loved and eerful and fond of reading, just like me. She as good at school but ot brilliant and went a small college in ermont, and at the age f twenty-four she fell n love—just like me. he married the next ear, and she and her usband moved into a omfortable old house. he years passed. She as happy. Then one ay, do you know what appened? Listen: I'll ell you what happened. Nothing happened. She as happy, life was orth living, she liked he summer, and the all, and the winter, and he spring, and she iked all the days of the veek. And this woman vas not like me, not ike me at all.

That's my story. Did ou like it?

But—good lord—can ou believe it? All along 've been holding this nvelope. You must ave been wondering. Why didn't you *say* something? It's the ppraisal. As I said on the phone, I'm selling the ouse myself. I have no use for realtors—or eelators, as everybody says these days. God, ow Robert hated that. Put some water in the erculator for the reelator. Then we can discuss ucular war. Anyway, I had the place appraised, nd here's the report. I won't ask a penny more, ut I also won't take a penny less. That keeps it nice and simple.

Now if we step around this way . . . Door to the cellar. Back porch. I want to show you the back porch. But first the kitchen. *That* door?



DOWNSTAIRS BATH

The downstairs bath. Half-bath—tub and toilet, newly wallpapered, everything in fine working order. Please note the bookcase. I promised you a bookcase in every room and, by God, girl—as my grandpa used to say to my grandma—you'll get a bookcase in every room. I mean, what with Robert's books and mine. Will you just *look* at these things. A real mishmash. *Wealth of Nations. Jane Eyre. Wizard of Oz.* We knew where everything was, it just wasn't in any particular order, except of course in Robert's study. *The Guermantes Way. Psychopathology of Everyday Life.* Now there's a



title I've always liked. Screw's coming out of that towel rack. The paint's cracking over there; we'll want to have [illegible] toilet—I was the one who took care of things like that—the man said they came in two sizes: a short one, and a longer one. So I ask him what the difference is. He looks embarrassed, lowers his eyes. "Well, ma'am," he says, "the longer one is . . . sometimes it's more comfortable for . . . the gentleman." Can you believe it? I practically bit my tongue off, not to laugh. "More comfortable for . . . the gentleman." Robert and I howled over it. Of course I ordered the larger

one. We called it The Gentleman. Permit me to introduce you. Lady: Gentleman. Ahm right proud to make your acquaintance, ma'am. *To the Lighthouse. Tristes Tropiques.* Good God. I spent one night lying on the floor of this room, right here on this old linoleum. Can you imagine? It's hard to see how anyone could fit.

KITCHEN

Lots of sun through those windows. Kitchens should be bright, don't you think? You ought to see the light coming through the window onto the table, on a good summer morning. Of course it's terribly old-fashioned. Not nearly enough cabinet space. I know, I know. And I'm the only woman in America without a dishwasher. But really, where would you put it? I refuse to give up my sunny table. I could put one there—and cramp up the whole room. No, let it go. Besides, what would my friends do if they couldn't say: Oh, you poor *thing*! You've just *got* to redecorate. Of course I understand a new kitchen's a selling point. But I've told you about that. I'm sticking to the appraisal, no matter what.

You see up there? On top of the cabinets? Complete works of James Fenimore Cooper. Library sale. They were practically giving it away.

I could use a cup of tea. Would you care to join me? Oh, good. Good. I've been talking a blue streak, haven't I? And that's strange, because I'm known as a more or less quiet person. I calmed down after a few years of marriage. As I say, I was happy. It quiets you down. So: Robert's quiet wife. And now, isn't it odd, I have a desire to talk. Of course I don't talk to just anyone. But there's something about you . . . a sympathy, I think. I could sense it when you first entered the house.

Milk? Sugar? I'm afraid I've only got whole. I can't stand that two-percent stuff. Tastes like bad water, if you ask me. They say it isn't much different from whole anyway, you have to have *one* percent to accomplish anything. Accomplish *what*, I'd like to know. Of course someone with your figure doesn't have to worry. But I suppose it's always the ones who don't have to worry who do. No milk? I hadn't thought of that. Solves the problem nicely, doesn't it?



Mmm, that's good. That's very good. Tea calms me. Selling this house rattles me—it's like stirring a pile of leaves with a stick—you never know what's going to come slithering out—and tea calms me. Especially on an afternoon like this, the sun in and out—a little on the cool side. I do worry about my jonquils. Last year I lost half my forsythias. Just look at those clouds. Well. After that evening I told you about—the evening when a doubt crossed my mind—things continued as usual—except that they weren't as usual. I knew something was wrong. Believe me, I knew. Robert was withholding something from me. You have to understand that Robert was a secretive man. I mean, he was a combination of secretiveness and . . . openness. It's one of the things you get to know about a man. But this withholding, this, this awkwardness—well. It was new. Something had changed. It

set me. He knew it did. I still thought it was
e book that was harming him. He'd taken a
nester off, he was putting tremendous pres-
re on himself, and it wasn't going well. He
ld me very little about it. Typical Robert: bot-
it up, fight it alone. Be a man! I knew it had
do with *things*, American things—I think he
as even planning to call it *American Things*—
miliar household objects that were supposed
reveal something about American life in the
te nineteenth century. Robert taught history
id American studies at the community col-
ge. Have I mentioned it? They paid him noth-
g. It was a crime. Anyway: things. Fountain
ns, tin cans, bottle caps—he kept reading
out these things, searching for something
ep. He wanted everything to *mean* some-
ing. So of course I thought it was that. I want-
d it to be that. I could hear him scraping back
ie chair in the study, pacing around.
metimes he left the house on long walks, or
de to the supermarket late at night, where
e'd spend hours studying boxes, cans—or so he
id. I felt estranged from him. And, funny as it
unds, I began drinking a lot of tea. I liked the
tual, I suppose. One evening last summer I was
tting right here at this table, alone, drinking
a. Iced tea, it was, with a slice of lemon. I
eard Robert's footsteps coming down the
airs. He came through the dining room into
ie kitchen and sat down, right where you're
tting now. He had his sad, doomed look but
lso something else, a tension, an energy. I had
ie impression of a dangerous electrical wire—
ouch it and you're dead. In a clipped, haughty
ay, angry and cold but weary, broken—oh,
ho knew *what* it was—he told me. He con-
ssed. It was a withheld kind of outpouring, a
rangled eruption. But he confessed. He'd been
eeing someone. You won't believe this, but I
ought he meant a therapist. A shrink.
obert? But of course he meant a woman.

More tea?

Now this, too, may surprise you. My first
ought was: Oh no! Poor Robert! Not *him*! I
ean, *Robert*, whose harshest word after *ama-
ur* was *banal*—accent on the last syllable, to
ive it the true French stink. I could hear him
ocking it all, in that way of his. *Adultery*, for
hrissake, in *suburbia*, for Chrissake. Doesn't
he poor sap have a sense of style? Pure kitsch,
iddo. Right up there with busts of Beethoven
nd bookmarks with Emily Dickinson poems
rinted on them. And so forth. Poor Robert!
What a sad falling off. And so, creature of habit
hat I was, I wanted to *comfort* him, the poor
an. I mean there he was, sitting all doomed
nd sort of crumpled and . . . and *banal*, so of
ourse the only thing you want to do is reassure
our husband, while at the same time it's dawn-
ing on you what he's actually said, and there's a
panic starting somewhere because this hand-
some man with his doomed look has gone and
done something bad to you, if only you could
stop comforting him and start concentrating
long enough to figure out just what it unbear-
ably *is*.

I suppose I should have told you the house is
haunted. Well, of *course*. All houses are haunt-
ed. It's just that some are more haunted than
others. Robert's ghost is sitting right there,
where you're sitting now, and my ghost is sitting
here, listening to his strangled confession. The
air is full of ghosts. At night you can hear them:
sifting through the house, like sand.

I said nothing. I think
he wanted me to say
something to scream
at him, to burst into
tears. I felt he wanted
drama. I lowered my
eyes. I could tell I was
disappointing him. At
the same time I felt
threads of fire shooting
through me, a wondrous
fiery piercing, a kind of
. . . a kind of exhilaration
of misery. I thought I
might die, and that
dying might be a
strange, exciting thing to do. And you know, I
felt almost soothed, almost comforted in my
private fire, because it protected me from him,
from the words he had spoken.

Of course I don't talk to just anyone. But there's something about you . . . a sympathy, I think. I could sense it when you first entered the house

I think I exasperated him. The poor man
needed something from me, blame or forgive-
ness or . . . *drama*, and there I sat, exalted in mis-
ery, a saint of suffering. Who knows? When the
living have become the dead, who shall speak?
There was too much silence in the room. The
kitchen was no longer large enough to contain
all that silence. It was pushing against the walls,
cracking the plaster. I don't think he intended
to say more, but the silence was choking him.
He spat out some words, the way you do when
someone's hands are around your neck. He told
me things. I said nothing. He told me her name.
That's when I learned it was you.

You seem upset. Of course you ought to be.
Of course Robert would have sworn eternal
secrecy. I wouldn't be surprised if he made you
prick your finger with a needle and sign a docu-
ment in blood. Secret love! What could be bet-
ter? What you failed to understand was Robert's
loyalty. It's true that by taking you as his—do
you mind the word *mistress*?—he had been dis-
loyal to me. That's what confused you. Your
mistake was to assume that there were two sep-
arate facts: a disloyalty, to me, and a new loyal-

ty, to you. No, whatever his feelings might have been for you, his disloyalty to me simply stirred up and even strengthened the old loyalty. He confessed to me because he was loyal and [illegible] with it. Robert betrayed you. I want you to know that. It's something we have in common.

Do you know what else he told me? He told me you were nothing to him. Don't you say anything. He told me you were a body, just a body. If he was trying to soothe me, he was failing brilliantly. But I want you to know what he said, sitting right there. Just a body. Men can be a little thoughtless sometimes, don't you think? Of course you can choose not to believe me, if it makes you feel better. Or you can believe that Robert was lying. A good man, lying to spare the feelings of his wife.

I was very weak. Once I even fell down the stairs. Can you imagine? Falling down the stairs out of sheer unhappiness?

But let's adjourn to the porch, shall we? There's so much more to tell.

BACK PORCH

This was all open, when we bought the place. I used to hang a line between these two posts: I remember Robert's socks dripping onto the handrail. On Robert's salary and the little I picked up part-time at the library, we had to be careful—a dryer was the last thing we considered necessary. It was the mosquitoes that finally drove us to screen it in. I don't think it's too chilly out here, do you? We can sit a little. Sit, why don't you. I just loved it out here, summer evenings. I'd come out with a book and sit with it facedown in my lap. You can hear a lot of sounds in the summer, and I liked all of them: children's voices all woven together, a car radio suddenly loud and then fading away, a basketball hitting a driveway with that smacking sound, grackles in the trees—and the crickets, always the crickets, and always the lawn mowers. I used to think of the evening lawn mowers as big summer insects—a sort of bee. Robert never lasted long out here. I think it made him restless. But he always sat for a while, in the summer, to keep me company. Sometimes we'd talk about converting it to a full-time room—windows, heat, I imagined myself sitting out here feeling warm in winter—but my heart wasn't in it. A porch needs to be open. You need to feel the air and hear the sounds. Don't you think? The whole idea is to be outside and inside at the same time. That's what a porch *is*.

After Robert's confession, I came out here. Sat right there where you're sitting now. Who knows what I was thinking? It's hard to remember things, even the most important things in your life. All you know is that they happened. I sat down. I felt dead. At the same time my mind was very sharp and alert. And this might strike you as odd, but I was in a state of—of surprise. Robert had killed me, a quick stab to the heart, and I'd come out on the porch to watch myself die. Why wasn't I dead? It did surprise me. Or maybe the dead have their thoughts, as well as the living. Do you think so? My mind, as I said, was very alert. I heard Robert's words, the words that I knew were going to change my life, and already I was judging them. You see, I heard in his confession a certain—well, a certain pride. He had said his piece—he had come to terms with his conscience—he'd acted like a *good man*. He had performed well. I almost felt like standing up and applauding. Bravo, Robert! Now it was my turn—to act like a *good woman*. All I had to do was forgive him.

I don't know how long I sat out here. I remember noticing it had grown dark: a peaceful summer night. At one point I heard Robert's footsteps in the kitchen. They stopped at the door of the porch, and I knew he was standing there in the dark kitchen, looking at me through that window. Then he went away.

When I first met Robert, when I was twenty-four and he was thirty, he used to come into the bookstore where I was working. He wore jeans and workboots and flannel shirts. He looked like a skinny lumberjack. I thought he was my age—a student, maybe. Even then he was an interesting man. A teacher who hated teachers, an intellectual who made fun of intellectuals, a Jew with no ties to Judaism—unless you count the piano. Robert liked to say that all pianos are Jews. He didn't sit comfortably in his skin. It's one of the things that most attracted me to him.

I thought about that time in a dim, puzzled way, as if I'd read about it in some book I could no longer remember.

Then I recalled something that happened once at a party. A loud man was talking to Robert a little way off. "Good old Robert," I heard him say, with a friendly laugh. I saw Robert's face tighten behind his little smile. Later I asked what *that* was all about. "Oh, he's a fool," Robert said. "But even so, he has no right to call me *good*." At the time I thought he was just being—you know, being *Robert*. But now I wondered about it. Was it possible he wasn't a good man? Of course I never thought he was a saint. I couldn't have stood that. Robert was difficult. But I knew him—I knew

That's what I asked myself, sitting right there where you are.

What do you do when you're dead alive and your husband is a ghost? What do you do? You go up to bed. I went up to bed. I felt sluggish with weariness, but at the same time feverishly tense, as though I might explode. There was no question of sleeping in the same bed as Robert. But when I looked into the dark room and saw the bed empty, I felt . . . I wanted to . . . I mean, Jesus, to think that he'd gone to her—to that body—to *you*—well, it was too much. Then it all came rushing into me, a black wind. Do you know it, the black wind? It's the wind after the first wind. It's the wind that comes rushing in when you think the worst is over, sweeping you clean, till you feel like a room without furniture. I realized then that I wasn't going to be spared. Not even a little. At that moment I heard a creak and realized that Robert had gone to sleep on the couch in his study. I felt grateful to him for removing himself from our bed. Robert was always *sensitive*, a very *sensitive* man—and fell with relief into a sort of half sleep.

That was how it was for the next few weeks: I slept without sleeping, woke without waking. I ran a low fever. I felt . . . bruised all over, as if I'd been beaten up. Robert worried over me, without coming too close. He tried to show me that he wanted to take care of me but that he understood my desire to be left alone. A sensitive man, as I said. And you, too—a sensitive woman. I can see that. I can feel that. Two sensitive people, giving off flames of hell. As for Robert and me, we barely spoke, though I didn't shut him out. I think he thought I was punishing him. But I wasn't *doing* something to Robert. I just—it was like—listen. Robert had *gone away*. Do you understand that? In his place was his—this *man*, a polite stranger, who hung around the house, making sure I didn't . . . die. I guess. Or hurt myself. You can hurt yourself, in a house. I was very weak. Once I even fell down the stairs. Can you imagine? Falling down the stairs out of sheer unhappiness? Nothing got broken, but I think it alarmed him, this man who was always in the house, imitating my dead husband.

Where was I? Sleep. Of course I didn't only sleep. I moved about. I felt heavy, draggy—and light, very light, as if at any second I'd float right up to the ceiling. I lost my color; my skin was sickly white, like one of those old dinner plates you see glimmering out at you in a dark corner of an antique shop. I felt feverish and dead. Robert was—as I said, he was very good to me. I mean, what else could he *be*? He wanted me to see a doctor. Can you imagine that? Doctor, Doctor, my husband is *seeing another woman*. Do you have a pill for that, Doc? Maybe a shot in the behind? No, I'd never be able to keep a straight face. Besides, wasn't Robert thinking of himself, as well as of his poor zombified wreck of a wife? Much better for *him* if she's a happy, perky little wifey-wife. Thaaat's all right, dear. Boys will be boys. A little *fun* never hurt anybody, for gosh sakes. All's forgiven! Really! Not only that, you can bring her over here! Sure, why not? We have a big bed—there's room for one more. I'll make punch and sandwiches. Bring my binoculars. Well. Don't get me going on that. If I was sick, if I was depressed, at least my sickness was mine. I wasn't going to let him take *that* away too.

But, as I said, I wasn't thinking a whole lot about Robert, at that time. I was actually thinking about . . . you. Does that surprise you? It shouldn't. It's a natural thing. Up to that point, there had really been only the two of us—Robert and me. Now there were three. People say that about having a baby, you know: go in two, come out three. Well, we had *you*. There was Mommy, and Daddy, and cute li'l cuddly-wuddly you. So of course I *thought* about you. God, did I think about you. I thought about you all day long. I even thought about you that night I spent lying on the floor of the bathroom. Dizzy spell: lay there all night long, after coming downstairs at two in the morning. Do you know what it feels like, lying on the linoleum in the bathroom thinking about your husband's cutie pie? Sometimes I imagined you as a big blonde slut in a tight red dress. Other times you were a slim business-type in a snazzy skirt suit—you know, one of those jackets with a notched lapel and a trim skirt that zips up the side. Zip zip. Oh, *darn*, my zipper's stuck. Would you mind giving me a hand, Robert? Of course it wasn't *you* I thought about, exactly. Just: that woman. And so I thought about her. I became obsessed by her: by you. I tried to imagine you as Robert would: a desirable body. I . . . undressed you, in my mind. I looked at you. I . . . did things to you. Or rather, I did things to her, to them, to all women—no one was safe from me, in my mind. I've always thought of myself as a—a *modest* woman, but I wasn't modest as I tried to find my way to the heart of Robert's need. I imagined the friends of friends, women I didn't know by name, wondering if she was the one. I unhooked their bras, I pulled down their underpants—the way I imagined Robert would. Just a body. What was a body? I had one, but it wasn't the right one. Which one was that? Maybe a *young* one?—sophomore?—a no-bra, T-shirt kind of a girl—one of those hipless wonders, legs like a nutcracker. Could be. Who knew? Not me. There was one woman—a colleague of his. Someone without a name. Miss Colleague. I'd met her a few

times, one of those touchy-feely types, always putting her fingers on everybody's arm, as if she were afraid she wouldn't be noticed unless she stabbed you to death with her nails. You know the type. Eyes too bright, chin too sharp, bra too pointy. Was she the one? Why not? What did they have, these phantom-women, that I didn't have? I tried to picture things I'd never . . . well, I won't say *never*. But they never concerned me, especially, the things other women did in bed. Why should they? Things were fine between us, in that department. I mean, weren't they? Of course things weren't exactly the way they used to be—not after twenty-two years. You get used to each other. You don't feel *crazy* anymore. It's actually a *good* feeling. But I mean . . . but I'm losing the thread. And so I made women naked in my mind. I tore off their clothes. I looked at their bodies. I turned myself into a man. My hips shrank. My arms grew hard. I was a lovely man; tense, dangerous. I was a lean teenager, mean and cool, prowling the suburban streets till dawn.

Women's bodies! They were out there, millions of them, and men wanted them. It was just that I had the wrong body. A shame, really. I'd always figured I had the right body, but it turned out I'd gotten the wrong one by mistake. A shipping error. Sorry, lady, no refunds. Earlier, we'd been friends, my body and me—at worst I'd treated it with a kind of skeptical affection. Now I became ruthless. I judged it mercilessly. Upstairs in the hall there's an old mirror—framed in mahogany—shaped like a shield. It's one of the pieces of furniture we inherited from Robert's grandmother. One day I took the hand mirror from my dresser and stood in front of the hall mirror, in my underpants. I turned around and studied my figure in the hand mirror. I put my weight first on one leg, then the other. I tried to desire myself, I tried to imagine myself an object of desire. And as I stood there, studying myself coldly but feverishly too, it came over me that what was upsetting wasn't so much the harsh judgment I passed on my body as the knowledge that I was entering willingly into a world of humiliation.

Finally I couldn't bear it any longer—I mean, not knowing what you looked like. And so one night I paid you a little visit. Oh, Robert neglected to mention that? How careless of him.

It must have been toward the end of July, the second or third week after Robert's famous little confession. I was still in a strange state, drifting through the house, never really sleeping, never really awake. Ghosts are like that, I imagine. Do you think ghosts are like that? I remember it was a hot night: a hot summer night, the kind I had always liked, back in the days when I was among the living. Robert was asleep in the study; I came down and sat here, on the porch. I was still running a low fever. I was dressed, I remember that—jeans, I think, and a blouse—and I tried to listen to the sounds of the night, but I was too restless for that. It was impossible to breathe, and I thought I'd go out and take a little walk.

I was struck by the peacefulness of the night, and I thought maybe—just maybe the peace would enter me and calm me a little. And I was struck, you know, by how much it looked like a summer night. I could feel myself smiling, the way you do when something is so much itself that it seems a little . . . contrived. Somebody'd put a big white moon up there in the sky, and for some reason it reminded me of the round white top of a Dixie cup, the underside—the way the ice cream sticks to it and makes little patterns like mountain ranges—and you could see the shadows of chimneys slanting along roofs and the shadows of trees thrown up against the fronts of houses. I could smell things very sharply: the leaves of a big Norway maple, fresh tar from a driveway, wet grass and grave under a sprinkler. Of course I knew where I was going. Robert had told me your name, and one night I'd looked it up in the phone book. Right here in town! How fortunate for both of you.

I knew it was on the other side of town, out past the cemetery. I wasn't exactly sure where. It seemed to me that I'd been walking for hours; it may be that I lost my way. But when you have a fever, when you're walking in a waking dream, through a summer night made up of nifty stage props—streetlight, moon, tree—then what does it matter whether you get there sooner or later or never or always, your husband asleep in the study, your front door open, your mind disordered, your heart opening and closing like a fist, the hair of a dead woman streaming from a tree, or was it a kite string, a ball of unraveling twine, rope of a hanged man, not for me to say. Then I was there, in front of her house—your house—the house of the wicked witch. Go awaaay, my voices sang in me. Oh staaay, my voices echoed. I took in the front porch—wicker sofa, the two plants hanging like . . . oh, like anchors . . . and shutters . . . with those little grooves in them. I went around the side toward the back. Two garbage pails with little wheels, tomato sticks with nothing growing, one of those grills that look like a diving bell. Magnolia in back yard. Round glass table, metal chairs. Two doors! The back door at the top of the steps locked. But the cellar door—really, people ought to be more careful, why only the other day . . . It opened so easily, as if you'd been expecting me. Were you? Up the little stairs

Moonlight in the kitchen. So tired! I was, you know: tired, I mean. Everything was strange. The edges of the plates in the dish rack caught the moonlight. I realized that I was in an enchanted cave. Clock ticking like a stick knocking. Bick bock. Bick bock. Knife handles sticking out of a block of wood, as though the knives had been thrown at a target. But where was the knife thrower, where was the woman on the turning wheel? I took one out—the sort of thing you do, in a fever-dream. The hall led to three doors, all open. Three: just like a fairy tale. I looked in the first. Empty! Looked in the second. Empty! Of course! I wanted to shout: Oh, *I* know where you're hiding! Can't fool *me*! Through the third door I could see you lying in your bed. I went in—just like that—and stood over the bed, looking at you. I was surprised to see a knife in my hand. Where had it come from? I felt that I was on a stage, and people were watching: the crazy lady with the knife, bent over the sleeping witch. You had stolen my husband. Broken my heart. Ruined my life. Why shouldn't you die? I felt the moon turn suddenly red, bleeding great red drops into the sky. I was exalted. I was an angel: wrathful. I looked at you. Robert didn't tell you this? Your face was on the pillow, turned a little to one side, your hair loose, flowing. You were younger than I was, but not young, not the way I had imagined. Light hair, straw not blond. The covers were partway down, sheet turned over the spread to form a border. Your hand on the edge of the sheet, as though you were stroking it. Your bare throat, your nightgown. Not the silky clingy thing I'd expected, but a cottony smocky sort of thing. I could see you were an attractive woman, handsome not beautiful, not drop-dead gorgeous, nothing little-girly about you—character in the mouth. I stood there. I stood there. What came over me then . . . it was . . . I had a sense that all this . . . the moonlight in the room, the stillness, the hair on the pillow . . . it was as if I'd crept into the room of a sleeping child, or . . . something along those lines. Call me a sucker for cheap effects. But suddenly I was the wicked witch and you were . . . only you. A woman sleeping. I looked at you. I tried to make you dream me. I saw something in my hand. I left the room and never looked back.

That was our first meeting.

And when I got home, it was the strangest thing. Robert was there in the doorway, waiting for me. Isn't that just too much? He looked worried to death, poor man. So I told him—where I'd been, I mean. I left out the part about the knife. Then I went up to bed.

But, good lord, listen to me!—nattering on and on. You'd think a person had nothing better to do all day than sit and listen to stories. You can stay a bit longer, can't you? I'm so glad. I haven't even shown you the upstairs. But first the dining room. This way, this way.

DINING ROOM

I promised you bookcases. Well, take a look. *Uno. Due.* And please observe the top shelf of the hutch. Book junkies, both of us. I started reading at five and forgot to give it up the way I gave up everything else—my tutu, my ballet slippers—so long, piano music, goodbye, ice skates, Ginnie doll, tennis racket . . . I can remember in sixth grade sitting holding *Anne of Avonlea* open on my lap, pretending to memorize the products of Central America. Chicle. Or was that *South* America? I had bangs back then—down to my eyebrows, like a helmet. Began to [illegible] in high school, and col[illegible] where I majored in guess what—and then came the bookstore, and Robert, and good old marriage—still turning those pages. Do you think people [illegible] I'm grateful for it, myself, but you know what? I haven't opened a book for nearly a year. One day I simply stopped. That's right. Just when you'd think I needed it most, reading deserted me. Books just didn't like me anymore. Betrayed by literature! But really, among so many betrayals, what's one more?

I was still in a strange state, drifting through the house, never really sleeping, never really awake. Ghosts are like that, I imagine

This table is also from Robert's grandmother. Solid mahogany—and will you look at the carving on those legs. Still, there's a heaviness, don't you think? We ate breakfast and lunch in the kitchen, dinner always here. Robert complained about the table at first—said it made him think he was eating roast pig with Queen Victoria—though really there's nothing actually Victorian about the thing. But it was too fine a piece just to let go. It always got on his nerves a little. I kept it covered with a cheerful tablecloth, which helped.

There's a secret about this table—two secrets. But first I have to tell you about tough girls and golden girls.

Just sit. Pull out a chair.

In high school I was never aware of any special unhappiness. You look surprised. But no, really. Oh, I had my bad days, my rotten days, but they were basically exceptions. The truth is, adolescent angst bored the hell out of me. At fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, I was never a morbid type, never broody or gloomy or crazy-restless.

All that was like some dumb style of hat I wouldn't be caught dead in. There were girls in my school—I could tell you stories. Girls who wore long black dresses with lots of rattly beads, stared at you with big sorrowful eyes, and looked like they started each day bright and early by slitting their wrists in the bathtub. Who needed it? Really, who needed it? I had a few good friends, I got on all right with my classmates. I fit in well enough, without fitting in completely—whichever one with me. But right from the start I was aware of two kinds of girls whose very existence made me uneasy. I would see girls walking down the halls in pairs wearing tight skirts and sweaters, swinging their hips—girls who laughed loud, brassy laughs, wore too much lipstick, talked dirty at the lockers, and had sudden fits of anger. These were the tough girls, who'd give you a hard look if you met their eyes. What was it about them that seemed to make me doubt myself? And then there were the golden girls . . . Ah, those golden high-school girls! Beautiful—really *gifted* with beauty—slightly languorous, clean-smelling, friendly but somehow untouchable. There they were, the golden girls, sashaying down the halls with their long hair swaying, giving off a kind of [illegible] as soon as you saw them they'd just spent the entire day at the beach . . . oh, they were as far as possible from the tough girls with their black leather jackets and cheap pocketbooks. But I saw that they shared a secret, the tough girls and the golden girls, a secret I wasn't allowed to know. It was the way they walked. Yes, they were at ease in their bodies, they inhabited their bodies—while I, don't you see, I stood a little outside my own body, I didn't fit myself. I was like one of those color comics where the color doesn't fit the outlines but leaves a space on one side and spills out the other. Don't misunderstand me. I wasn't ashamed of my body. It was a pretty good body, as bodies went. No, I wasn't morbidly self-conscious—that came much later. That was *your* gift. But I was estranged from my body—in a not unpleasant way.

Sometimes I felt myself turning into you, a high-class whore in fancy lingerie, seducing my husband away from his boring wife

The grand thing about Robert is that he made the color fit the outline. In college I'd had two lovers—to call them that—strange name for the loveless—who taught me something [illegible] my body had its own life, and I myself another. But with Robert—well, he liked to tell me I was *good in the sack*, and all that jazz, but what thrilled me was how I no longer . . . I mean . . . it's difficult to say. But the color fit the outline. I somehow got into my own skin. Do you see what I mean?

But I was telling you about the table. Here was this heavy, serious, deeply *solemn* piece of furniture, sitting right there where we had to eat our dinner. Robert said we ought to paint it yellow, or maybe put up a Ping-Pong net. Or else we ought to eat on the floor, he said, underneath the table. One night after dinner we both stood looking at it, the grandmother table—gleaming, solid, unmovable—all too depressingly *there*. We looked at each other. And we knew; we knew how to break the spell. And so we made love on the table. After clearing away the dishes, of course. Right over there, near that end. "That'll give her something to think about," Robert said later. I never knew whether he meant the table, or his grandmother, or Queen Victoria.

It was our little joke—our secret—our little protest against gravity. We ate in the dining room without trouble, after that.

We were lighthearted, Robert and I. Can you understand that?

I don't know exactly what I hoped for, after the night of my visit to you. If it was peace I was looking for, an end to night madness, I found none of it. Instead of imagining all women, I confined myself to just you—but you grew to be a giantess, you were all women, you were more than all women. You were my obsession, my . . . demon. I imagined Robert making love to you, over and over again, until my head felt battered. I wondered what you did in bed exactly, what you did to draw him to you. I'd seen your plain nightgown, but I imagined you had fancy things, just for him: black lace underpants, for example. Robert had once pointed to a pair of black lace underpants on a mannequin and said: "Do you think she's trying to tell me something?" And speaking of a colleague's wife he said: "She's a white cotton underwear sort of woman"—curled lip, little dismissive wave of the fingers. "Like me," I said. "Oh, you're different," Robert said with a laugh. And it's true that I like yellow, and blue, as well as white. But I thought of that mannequin, when I imagined Robert in your room. Black lace underpants: was that your secret? I imagined him tearing them off with his teeth. It wasn't—you realize—simply a matter of black lace underwear. It was that I thought I might have misunderstood something about Robert, that my whole life might have been wrong.

So: black lace underpants. But that was only the beginning. I imagined you owned more spe-

cialized things, things you ordered from expensive catalogues—maybe a sheer pink bra embroidered with flowers, or one of those male-fantasy things that hook in back and come with garters to go with your lace-top thigh-highs and your spike heels. Or, say, a nice black nylon spandex slip with lace hem over your pale peach bikini panties. Oh, I imagined you could teach Victoria secret or two! Unless the trick was simpler than hat. Under a tight skirt that showed off your egs—look, Robert!—no underpants.

There was no stopping you now. You'd do nything—anything. I saw you in a little-girl Sunday frock—ironed and pink—sitting with your knees pressed together—your long-lashed eyes blinking innocently—a nice pink bow in your hair—your legs in black fishnet stockings. And of course there was your classic chambermaid routine: short black dress, white apron, little white cap, lowered eyes—oh yes, Sir, oh *no*, Sir, very *well*, Sir—reaching higher, higher, higher with that cute feather duster as your skirt hiked up.

I imagined Robert standing behind you, burying his teeth in your shoulder.

Or you as calendar pinup in six-inch heels and black top hat—your back to Robert and me—black-gloved hand on hip—white dress shirt not quite covering your perfect behind—as you glance over your shoulder at us—well, hello there—with bee-stung lips—in a darling little sulky pout.

But maybe that wasn't it at all, maybe there was some other trick you used, to get him into that room of yours. One summer Robert and I traveled to Paris. Our hotel room was small, but we faced a courtyard, which seemed to me exotic. On the first night I was startled by a loud cry, a terrible anguished groan that made me think someone was being murdered. I ran to the window, but Robert pulled me away, laughing. I realized that what I was hearing was the sound of a woman screaming in orgasm. I was uneasy, thinking of my own much quieter sounds. "I imagine he's completely deaf by now," Robert said, in that way of his. But now I wondered: Is that what men liked? Were you a screamer? I imagined you letting everything go, filling the room with murderous cries, with shouts of ecstasy bordering on pain.

I watched the two of you *making love*—is that what you called it?—in your moonlit love nest on the other side of town—while I lay alone in my big big bed and Robert creaked in his study. Sometimes I felt myself turning into you, a high-class whore in fancy lingerie, seducing my husband away from his boring wife. And he would make love to us fanatically—insanely—in the cheap motel room of my mind—till we hurt between the legs.

Is this what's called jealousy? I guess. Who knows? For me it was also a kind of—I don't know, a kind of exploration. As though I wanted to push past whatever I thought I was, into regions of unknown pain, frontiers of humiliation. Look at me!—the cowgirl of sorrow.

Sometimes I thought of beaches: Robert and me at the beach, sun shining on sandbars—another life. Robert leaning back on his elbows, his skinny muscly legs crossed at the ankles, images of sky and water in his dark glasses. Dream-women walking in the sand, walking right there in his sunglasses—he always did like a pair of long legs on a woman. Like yours. At the beach he would look at them admiringly. I never minded—well, maybe a little. More than a little. And both of us liked to look people over, it was a thing we did well together. "Your type," I'd say, nodding toward some leggy bimbo in a string bikini. Robert would laugh. Sometimes I worried about my legs, that they weren't long enough. "Long enough for what?" he said once. Typical Robert.

Was it your legs? Was it that simple? Two inches taller and a girl gets it all? Maybe there was something you *did* with your legs, some special way of walking across a room, or . . . or something. A technique you practiced: a secret craft. That was it. Or maybe it was your body itself that had a secret—some special feature—some unusual development—that no man could resist. I liked the idea of a secret—something hidden—because then you were lifted into the realm of magic, where you defeated me unfairly—where nothing was my fault.

Or maybe your nasty little secret was that you talked a different way in bed—talked *dirty*, as they say. Is that what golden girls do? I imagined the words coming from your mouth, words I never used because to me they were sharp stones flung at bodies. And Robert would never . . . In the night I whispered them aloud: Cunt. Cock. Fuck. I was oddly soothed by them, as I said them over and over again: Cunt. Cock. Fuck. Fuck me, Robert, I imagined you saying. Come on, Robert. Fuck me. That's what it comes down to, I said. Cunt. Cock. Fuck. I spoke them louder and louder. They thrilled me and hurt me. I had the confused sense that I was saying goodbye to something. My childhood? But I was a forty-seven-year-old woman! I felt tears on my face.

Late that same night I put on my robe and prowled around downstairs, exhausted and awake. I sat on the porch, but the sound of crickets was like a burn on my skin. In the kitchen I filled a glass with ice cubes and pressed it to my forehead. I walked into the dining room. That afternoon Robert had tightened a screw in a drawer pull. The screwdriver was

lying on the hutch. I picked it up and went over to the table.

[illegible] mahogany with that screwdriver, I thought of many things—the time, long ago, when Robert and I made love on the table, the time when we were happy and lighthearted—but most of all I thought of you. I imagined the table was your face.

You look shocked. You shouldn't be. It's only a table, after all. Besides, these little expressions of yours—shock, dismay—I'm sure they're very appealing to *men*—who like to be shocking—



Robert was terribly upset, the first time he saw the mark. He wanted to know *why*.

Why, Robert? Why? He might as well have asked me to walk down the street with him

STAIRS

I like this old stairpost, don't you, with thi whatchamajigger on top: a bowling ball, i looks like to me, though Robert said i reminded him of the top of a barber pole—or bald old professor. Just follow me. Th handrail's a little nicked; nothing a bit of furni ture polish won't fix. Those three photograph were taken by my father—Mexico—photogra phy was his passion, though he sold insurance Here's the step where I stumbled. Second fron the landing. This one right here. Fell righ down all those steps and landed on the floor a the foot of the stairs, down there by th hall closet. I could've broken my neck Robert was impressed. Have you ever fall en down a flight of stairs, out of sheer— suppose it was sorrow. A sorrowful fall. remember everything: a feeling of just let ting everything go, that sense of release, i was almost exhilarating, like floating up ir the air, except that my head was bangin against the banister and my body was a bi awkward lump with arms and legs stickin out all over the place. At the bottom I la there thinking: so *that's* what it's like falling down stairs. One leg was bent in a funny way and my skirt was partway up. wondered if anyone could see my under pants. Vanity!—take it from me, even hal dead we're stuck with it. So there I was lying with my skirt up, aware of lookin like some woman trying to seduce some man. Then I tried to remember the las time I'd made love to Robert. It seemed a long time ago. But was it really that long And then out of nowhere I thought of Tom Conway. It's astonishing what a person wil think of, lying at the bottom of a stairway Tom Conway. I'll tell you about Tom Conway. But not now. Just three more steps after the landing. Robert said we ought to buy a statue and put it right there in the corner. A statue in magnificently bad taste—you know, white marble nymph emerging from bath, one hand modestly covering her pudendum. Instead: tah-dah! Emerson's *Essays*. *Murder on the Orient Express*. *Animal Architecture*. Can you

UPSTAIRS BATH

This is the shower. We had a new head installed five, six years ago, walls and ceiling painted. I ought to spray the damn walls to stop that speckling, but I never do. Those tiles are original with the house; a little grout wouldn't hurt over there.

At some point after Robert's confession—it must have been late summer? early fall?—I began to take lots of showers. I'd stay under till the hot water ran out, sometimes three times a day. If I wasn't going to die—and I realized, with astonishment—and disappointment—and a kind of outrage—that I was *not* going to die—then at least I was determined to be clean. It was as if by *seeing* you—as Robert so charmingly put it—he had made me dirty. Explain it any way you like: I needed to be clean, shining; a temple virgin; a little girl. Sometimes I took a long bath, and showered right after.

That medicine cabinet came with the house—one of the many home improvements we never made. You see the filigree work on the mirror. And here's something funny: funny *peculiar*, as a particularly obnoxious colleague of Robert's used to say, not funny *ha ha*. Every time I stepped out of the tub, I would see myself in that mirror. Of course I'd always seen myself in that mirror, but it struck me for the first time how I saw only my top half. It was a mermaid mirror. Yes, I was a mermaid—nothing below my waist. Of course by this time Robert and I were no longer *making love*, as the saying goes. So it made a weird kind of sense that when I looked at myself naked in the mirror, after stepping out of the tub, I had no lower half. That was one of your cruelest thefts: stealing my bottom half. I suppose it was just as well, since nothing any longer pleased me about my body. And this was strange, because—but haven't we spoken of this already? You've really got to excuse me if I repeat myself. So many things in my head, going round and round! But you see, I'd always been easy enough, in my mind, about my body. I mean, I always did fill out a sweater pretty well—that kind of thing. Of course my *legs*—but that's another story. Still, all in all. Not that I ever loved my body, for God sakes—or *sake*, as Robert would say. God's. Pause. Sake. It was just that I accepted it, the way I accepted my—oh, I don't know, my nose. There it is: a nose. Look at it as long as you like, it's still just a nose. Hey there, nose. You know, there are people who spend their entire lives doing nothing, I mean *nothing*, but worrying about their noses. Then they die, and go to a heaven full of angels with perfect angel-noses, and for all eternity they do nothing but worry about their noses. That was never my way. But now, thanks to you, I found myself worrying about my body. It was wrong in every way, an immense . . . wrongness. Too this. Too that. Too—oh, everything. I hated it all. For the first time in my life, at the tender age of forty-seven, I became an adolescent.

Do you know what I wanted? What I really wanted? What I wanted, the thing I wanted—it was to become a little thing, a doll, to be with a dab of Mercurochrome on my knee.

Yup, you got it, sister. To start over . . .

Oh, and by the way, I'm keeping the [illegible] case here. But the ghosts of books—from Robert's time. See? One on the radiator—one on the floor—and there, on the edge of the [illegible]

You know, when you hate your body, then you think continually about your body, and when you think continually about your body, then you become nothing but a body, you become a disgusting little materialist. You become a secret sensualist, a sort of—a sort of hangdog sensualist. Oh, I like that. Hangdog sensualist. I do have a way with words sometimes, you still grant me that. "You have a way with words," Robert once said, and then he paused, thinking it over, and *then* he said: "Sometimes. I grant you that." So. Let us grant me that. But here's the thing: I hated my body. I hated my body because it wasn't your body. You look as if you're about to maul me with a compliment. Please refrain. Besides, I didn't hate only my body. I also hated your body. Why don't we change the subject?

Poor Robert. And there you were, waiting for him in that little house, with your long legs practically sticking out the window

STUDY

Robert's study. Within each [illegible] ten to this. Within each period?—alphabetical by author. Is that order, or what? All summer long I seemed to hear him pacing. Scrape the chair back, pace, scrape the chair forward. Scrape it back. Pace, scrape, pace, scrape. God. Why no rug? Sometimes I blame his book for everything. Of course that's too easy, it lets everyone off the hook: you, Robert, and li'l ol' me. Besides, a man set on betraying his wife is bound to find an excuse. Bound to. Still! That awful book. Robert was too self-critical ever to write a book. A book for him was pure torture. He should never have taken that leave. Poor Robert. And there you were, waiting for him in that little house, with your long legs practically sticking out the window. You must have seemed—the solution. Of course he needed *consoling*. Those long walks he used to take that spring! That was the time, you know, when I felt something was a little wrong between us, a little . . . off. Later I realized he must have met you on one of those walks—unless he'd met you before, and was simply

Apparently the thing to do was find his E spot. When you found it, you pressed it. Then he raped you. Your marriage was saved

very sign that was sup-

Gasoline. Matches. No wonder he hurried home, the poor man. He'd find me lying in bed in my nightie, or else in the shower. But I was already getting better. I was eating a little. I felt like a house that had burned down, leaving the charred foundation and half a chimney. Of course I was still a burned-down house. It's just that I wasn't burning down anymore.

Besides, what was all the fuss about? Men have affairs every day. It's chic—it's cool—and good for you too. Keeps down that bad cholesterol. And great for your lower back. The numbers say it all. According to the most recent survey, ninety-nine point eight percent of all American husbands have been unfaithful to their wives at least twice in the last year. Did you know that? Also, and this may surprise you, ninety-two point four percent of all American men have slept with their own mothers. Sad but true. But here's the good news. Ninety-four point six percent of men with erectile dysfunc-

never enjoyed it anyway. I found these facts in women's magazines. I was beginning to eat, as I mentioned, and I was starting to go out a little in the car: CVS, Grand Union, you name it. Wherever I went, women's magazines sprang out at me. Sleek, insolent panther-women looking at me with jungle eyes. Cheekbones like ski slopes. Thumbs hooked in bikini underpants, like a guy wearing jeans. Forty-three Ways to Snag Your Man. One Hundred Sixty-three Ways to Drive Him Insane with Lust. All over America, housewives were reading this stuff. Was I the only one who wasn't in on the secret? I bought a few and read them sitting in the car. Eat All You Want and Get Thin. Twelve Sizzling New Positions. Apparently the thing to do was find his E spot. When you found it, you pressed it. Then he raped you. Your marriage was saved. The trouble with the E spot was that it was very hard to locate; it was somewhere near the abdomen, or the pancreas. You could waste a lot of time looking for it, and meanwhile your man might fall insanely in love with someone else—someone thinner than you. I think I'm talking too fast. Am I talking too fast? I feel that I'm talking a little rapidly and I am going to make a conscious

One evening after returning from the Grand Union—I liked to walk up and down the long aisles pushing my basket, how it soothed me—I took a drive to your house. I parked almost across the street and watched the front windows. In the living room the blinds were down but the lights were on. Your bedroom was dark. After a while I saw the light go on in your bedroom. The blinds were closed and lowered

halfway. I saw you move toward the window and lower the blinds, as if to keep me from spying. I could see only part of you, from a little above the waist to about mid-thigh. You were wearing an Indian-print skirt with a wide red belt. I thought of my bathroom mirror: I was the woman without a bottom half, and you—you were nothing but a bottom half. Then I imagined you were a mermaid in reverse, legs below and fish scales above, and the idea struck me as so absolutely incredibly hysterical that really I nearly died laughing.

GUEST ROOM

Bed. Bookcase. No one's stayed here in nearly a year. And yet, at one time, practically everyone stayed here: my mother, my father, Robert's mother, Robert's grandmother, for God sakes, his unmarried sister—let us please not forget Robert's unmarried sister—the sort of woman who does you a little favor, like picking you up a quart of milk at the corner store, and says with a bright little laugh, "You owe me one," meant to show her brave girlish humor in the face of life's burdens—and Robert's old roommate the failed painter, who backed me up against the refrigerator and instead of kissing me asked me the recipe for my ratatouille, and Robert's old friend Lydia, who is so relieved to get away from Manhattan and so happy to be up here where you can actually see the stars at night . . . and many more . . . scads of colorful folks . . . all of them right here, in this room. And sometimes I think of it as *your* room, if you know what I—in the sense that *that* would have been one solution. To the problem, I mean. Because you really *were* a problem, you know, a great big problem that didn't seem to have a solution, or had only difficult solutions that themselves were problems without solutions. You could have died of cancer, for example—but you were too *healthy* for that—or I could have killed you that night—or Robert could have given you up. The poor man was suffering so. We talked a little, now and then. I would come down for my late breakfast, and Robert would materialize from somewhere or other and stand by the table, looking proud and sad and doomed.

"I need to know what you're going to do."

"Going to do?"

"About us."

"Us, Robert?"

"Stop *echoing* me, will you? Just stop *echoing* me."

And then he would disappear; it was very strange. Poof! Gone. A sad, angry ghost. And so in certain moods I would think: oh, for heaven sakes. Come *on*, girl. Grow *up*. There's no reason to be so *childish* about this. Why am I being so selfish? It's all *me me me*. Why don't I ever think of *his* needs? Then of course I would think that you might as well move into the house—into the guest room. If I loved Robert, then I wanted him to be happy, didn't I? I saw myself tucking the two of you in at night, sitting on the side of the bed—oh, the adorable little rascals!—telling a bedtime story. And they allll lived *hap* pilyeverafter. Nighty night! Don't let the bedbugs bite! I would be a sister, a saint. And if any little problem came up between you two, why, I'd be right there, in the house. I could serve you meals. I could bathe you. Gosh, I could do your nails: red hot, or a nice minty green, or black as witches. I could even dress you in the mornings, after your strenuous nights. As I say, it was one solution . . . to the problem. Look, the sun's gone in. Or is it getting dark? I'm feeling a little tired. I'll just sit for a minute on the side of the bed. If you don't mind. You sit on that side. No, go right ahead. There was something I wanted to tell you . . . You know: when I was lying at the foot of the stairs? Oh, now I remember.

In high school, senior year, I had a crush on a boy called Tom Conway. He was a good-looking, clean-cut sort of boy, not my type really, very shy, a little awkward, as if he'd grown into a body he didn't know what to do with—all those arms and shoulders and elbows and things. I don't know when I realized I had a crush on him. I liked being around him; it was like turning a corner and finding yourself on a street with shady maples and front porches. This wasn't crazy teenage love, with wildfire burning in your stomach, but something else, something . . . restful. Somehow we began taking walks together, that spring. We held hands. And that was it: no kissing, no hugging, no touching except for hands. We walked all over town, along tree-lined streets, with sun flickering on us through the leaves, up into the wooded section where the roads were curvy and there were no sidewalks and the big houses were set far back from the road. One day he took me to his house to meet his mother. She was a friendly woman, standing in the kitchen wearing an apron embroidered with apple branches. Right off the kitchen was a small room, with white curtains—a guest room, where his grandmother used to stay. Somehow we ended up lying on the bed in that room. We lay on our backs, on the green spread, holding hands. I remember it was late afternoon, and the sun coming through the windows had a very orange cast to it. Everything in the room was glowing in the orange light. I lay there entirely peaceful, entirely happy—I was without desire. Or let's say the kind of desire I had for Tom Conway was

completely satisfied by lying there on his grandmother's bed, in the orange light, holding hands, while his mother moved around in the kitchen. That summer his family moved to Arizona. I never saw him again. I don't know that I had time to miss him much, what with college starting and all the rest. But every once in a while, for no reason, when I'm walking along a familiar street, or coming up the back steps with a bag of groceries, or lying there at the foot of the stairs, I think of that room, with the white curtains, and the orange sunlight coming in.

You look tired. We're almost done.

BEDROOM

Our room. No, come in. I want you to come in. I said: come in. You know, I admire that hesitation. It shows you have a certain . . . decency. Or are you afraid of something? Good heavens! Nothing to be afraid of in here. Look: another bookcase. And permit me to introduce you to the, um, conjugal bed. Or have you two already met? Ha ha: my little joke. We used to read ourselves to sleep . . . in the old days. We made love every night, just about. Maybe not every night, but a lot—we didn't have to count. People count, you know. Twice a week. Once a decade. Then they look it up and compare themselves to the national average. That's what I find so . . . I mean, if we had grown distant or . . . Of course sometimes we were tired, or not exactly in the mood. But then the next night . . . or the night after . . . And sometimes there were longer gaps, when we both, for no reason . . . I mean, twenty-two years. It's a long time. I'm going to lie down here, I'm feeling a little . . . You lie down, too. I want you to. No, please: lie down. You're tired, I can tell. We can have a nice pillow talk, like girlfriends in junior high. Of course I never had them, those nice pillow talks in junior high, but still. Oh, don't you just *adore* that dreamy new math teacher? And Todd Andrews. He's soooo cute. That's how girlfriends talk, you know. At least I think they do. I used to imagine having talks like this with a girlfriend, but they weren't about boys, those talks, they were about . . . oh, books, and . . . and things. Take my hand. All right, then I'll take yours. Sisters! We've been through a lot together, we two. Listen. This is where I was lying when the call came about Robert's accident. That was in January. He'd been very upset, you know. We'd had an argument, a week earlier. Oh, a bad one. Do you know what we were arguing about? We were arguing about making the bed. Isn't that the strangest thing? The man on the phone kept saying something about black ice. The words seemed weird and scary, as if he were talking about some disease. The Black Ice Plague. Black ice in your carotid artery. Sharp splinters of black ice piercing the left ventricle. Robert was what? Was dead? He was *angry*, for God sakes, how can you die when you're . . . ? Killed by black ice. The black ice of his black-hearted icy wife.

I screamed; we had it out. He confessed. How many times can you confess to someone before you start wanting them dead?

Isn't it fun talking like this, just the two of us? Here's a secret. Don't tell anybody. When Robert and I fell in love, when I was twenty-four and he was thirty, it was all very passionate and so forth, but for a while there . . . he couldn't make love to me. It drove him wild. He swore that never, never before . . . He was ready to kill himself. But you know something? I didn't care. I was so in love with him that even if . . . It came right, soon enough. He was so grateful to me, as if I'd endured the impossible—fought some heroic battle. He swore I was an angel, a goddess. How I hated that. What he couldn't understand is that I was so happy that I didn't care about . . . about anything on earth. I was demented with happiness. They should've carted me off to the loony bin. And then, when we started making love, I don't know if you'll understand this, but it became absorbed into the happiness I was already feeling.

I asked him about you once. Only once. I asked him if you were married. I don't know why, but it seemed the one thing I had to know. He was shocked. His "No!" was almost violent. He looked at me—a sad, raging man. A man *misunderstood*. "I'd never break up a marriage." That's what he said to me. Proud pose: shoulders back, defiant look.

But what about *my* marriage, Robert?

Here's another secret. You won't tell, will you? Come closer: I have to lower my voice so no one will hear. I know that you've slept in this bed. With my husband, of course. Don't you pull away from me. We're having a nice little pillow talk—just the two of us. Of course it must be unpleasant for you to know that I know. I understand that. I mean, that I've known all along. It must be upsetting. Even embarrassing for some people. But once you start sharing secrets . . . I admit it changed my idea of you. I hadn't thought you would be so . . . what *is* the word I want? Bold? Cruel? I'll even tell you how I found out. Robert told me! Wasn't that sweet of him? Of course he had no choice. He knew I was on to something. That was in December, just after Christmas, when I went to visit my mother for a few days. At the time I'd begun to think that maybe we could somehow survive

Robert and I, the way a ruin survives. You can preserve a ruin, you know. It's artful, expensive work. And I thought: I'll stay in the house, and he'll stay in the house, and together we'll be a ruined monument, with ivy on the walls. People can come and admire us. We can charge admission. Of course you were still at the other end of town, pulling down shades, crossing and uncrossing those legs of yours. When I came home from my mother's I went up to my room to lie down. Robert had never moved back from the study. I saw right away that the bed had been made up wrong. Robert has absolutely no sense of such things. He was a domestic idiot, in some ways. I screamed; we had it out. He confessed. How many times can you confess to someone before you start wanting them dead? Or before you start wanting to be dead yourself? I remember one thing he said. He said he didn't think I loved him anymore. I believe he meant it, poor man, but it was also very clever. Because I broke your heart, dear, and because you're a cold-hearted bitch who won't forgive me one little bit for breaking your heart, I have the God-given right to screw somebody else in your bed. Like it or lump it, baby.

They say murderers always return to the scene of the crime. And look: here you are! Now all we need is a judge—and an executioner. Come on, sister! I'm almost done showing the house.

ATTIC

Look: my old cradle

Sometimes I think everything in my life is up here. If I could just find it, if I could just put it in order, then I could reconstruct my entire life, day by day, minute by minute . . . Bookcases. Over there too. One of them used to be in the living room . . . years ago. People talk about *finishing* their attics, but how can you *finish* an attic? Things keep accumulating. That's the whole point of attics. They're never finished. That's why houses are different from ancient civilizations—the oldest layer is always on top. We did have it insulated, about five years ago. It was supposed to save on heating bills, but I don't think it saved all that much. I don't remember. That's what you get for trying to be practical. You would never call us worldly people, Robert and me. It was one of the good things about us. Intermittently worldly, at best. Half in, half out. Of the world, I mean. Every summer I mount an exhaust fan in that window. It gets blazing up here in the summer. You wouldn't believe how hot it gets. My old dollhouse. My red parasol. I used to stand by a window with the sun coming in and watch my forearm turn brilliant red under my parasol. Robert's eighth-grade science project: optical illusions. You know: is that a vase, or is it two profiles? Hoarders, both of us. You see that beam? Scene of my suicide. Did I mention that I committed suicide up here?



Well. I came up here with a rope. It was after Robert's accident—a few days after the phone call. I kept trying to *talk* to him. That's one thing about the dead: they don't talk to you. They listen, but they don't talk back. It can make you angry. I found the rope in the cellar and brought it up here. I had some confused idea, from the movies . . . I didn't even know how to make a slipknot. So you might say I didn't kill myself, after all. Still, when you come up to your attic carrying a rope, when you try to swing it over a beam, when you have every intention, then can't it be said that actually . . . in a real sense . . . despite appearances . . . And here I stand before you, a living dead woman, come back to tell the tale. A creepy place, real-

ly. You can hear things moving around in the dark. Wings. Weensy little feet. Children are right. Stay out of the attic. It's like walking around in the head of a madwoman.

CELLAR

Personally I've always preferred cellars. Careful, this rail's a little wobbly. There's something about going *down* to a place, don't you think? Watch your head. Robert used to clonk himself all the time. It's a lot like falling, really—you can feel a sort of tug, and you hang on just to keep from tumbling head over heels. And another thing is knowing you're headed under the ground, like a . . . like a rodent. Of course cellars can be creepy too. In my parents' house there were these big barrels under the stairs, full of who knew what. Rats. Bats. Dead men's bones. That's what I used to say, on the way down. Rats, bats, dead men's bones. Rats, bats, dead men's bones. Even here, things can surprise you. Once I reached into that pile of wood over there and a mouse ran over my hand. Do you know what it feels like, having a mouse run over your hand? It feels like you're being nibbled by lots of tiny mouths. That would be a good punishment, don't you think? Tie a person up and let mice run over them. Look: bookcases. Five, no less. Robert would sometimes talk about building a room down here to hold all the books in the house—a cellar library. He might as well have talked about building a subway station in the back yard. That's practically a new furnace. The old one broke down two years ago. It's got one of those automatic whatsits—you know, to regulate the water level. Copper water pipes. Washer/dryer hookup. Heck, we've got it all. Sink. Old bicycle. Dead refrigerator. Look at this clothesline, will you? It must be forty years old. Over here's where I murdered you. Oh yes, many times. Attics for suicide, cellars for murder. It makes sense. A quick blow to the head with a shovel or hammer. Cellars are full of hiding places, you know. Your head's in that trunk, eyes wide open. Your legs are in that metal cabinet, leaning up like oars. You stay right here. I'm not done with you. Don't play Little Miss Innocent with me. Haven't you ever murdered anyone? We all do it, you know. Lure them into cellars, hack off their limbs, stab those evil people until tears of joy pour down my face. See that cabinet? Your head again, hanging on a hook. Lovely she was, even in death. I buried you here, under the floor. Under that ratty rug. And don't look in the woodpile. This place is nothing but a graveyard, and all the corpses are you. Look. Over there. Over there. And there. But you know, a time comes when it doesn't really work anymore . . . the shovel too heavy . . . the ax handle broken . . . the voices quiet . . . the cellar empty. Do you know what I think? I think you lack imagination. I've always thought that about you. You don't murder people, you don't think about things. Did you ever imagine me? Did you? The irritating little wife left at home? Of course it was all a secret. You didn't want to *hurt* anyone. Above all Robert, I don't want to *hurt* anyone. That's why Robert never told you he told me. He knew that at the first sign of trouble you'd head for the hills. The arrangement must have struck you as perfect. A perfect adultery: no pain. Safe for everyone. The golden-girl special.



That's the old Ping-Pong table. We used to play quite a lot, in the old days. Ping. Pong. Ping. Pong. A ridiculous game, really. My only sport. Robert took it very seriously, the way he took most things. His backhand was so-so, but he had a very good forehand smash. Did you know that about Robert? A very good forehand smash.

Oh and another thing about you.

Because you stole my body from me, you must surely die. Because you lack imagination, you must surely die

you would come—like a fly. And I would show you my house. I would tell you my story. Then, when you'd seen everything, when you'd understood what you'd done—you, a woman of *feeling*, a woman like *me*—then you would know what to do. You would do the right thing.

Oh, you wouldn't do it at once, that very day. But one day, or, say, one night, at three in the morning, when you wake up for no reason and can't fall back to sleep, when every little thing in your life feels wrong, when you look into your heart and see rats, bats, and dead men's bones, when your soul is nothing but a lump of black ice, then, if you listen closely, you will hear my voice whispering in your ear. Then you'll get up your courage. It isn't difficult, you know. So many ways! In every room a sharp instrument, a blunt object, dangerous devices of all kinds. Pills in the cabinet, poison in the basement, knives in the kitchen drawer. A rope. A high window. Simple as ABC. Easy as pie. Did you know there's a gun shop in town? A woman like you would have no trouble. The temple. The mouth. The heart. The smooth place between the eyes. Think of it! Your arm outstretched on the bed, your head flung back, your hair strewn across the pillow. Very becoming, very . . . romantic. You do like to think of yourself that way, don't you? I mean, a *romantic* woman. A woman in a movie—with windswept hair, dress blown against your legs. But no—no—now that I think of it, maybe other endings are more your style. Here's one. The ice on the road, the sudden curve, the wildly turning wheel. Is that a good one? Do you like it? That was no accident, you know. Did you really think it was an accident? An accident? Come on. You know what it was! It was Robert's way of solving the problem. Yes! If it hadn't been for you . . . Yes! You! Murderer! You! Coming to my house! And that awful telephone. Robert's *what*? He's *what*? Black ice? I hate telephones . . . voices without faces . . . ghosts in dead houses . . . talking to you in the dark. Whispering. Shhh. I knew you'd come back. I knew you would. Did you know I knew? About you and Robert? Deep down did you know? I think you knew. I think you did. Or peaceful scenes . . . on the rug beside the fire, the small brown bottle beside you . . . or slumped

never have it any other way. You did wrong, my

get it over with. I think so. Do it.

puzzles, and mystery novels with nice big blo drops on the cover, and men with . . . oh wha that word . . . it's on the tip of my . . . oh I ha it. Desire. But sooner or later. One day or a other. Somewhere down the line. That sudden u easiness as you look out a window. That mome of panic as you climb the stairs. What will you d How can you live? Where will you go? There nowhere to go. There's nothing to do. No one t see. Don't you know? Why go on? And always th little voice whispering in my ear, always the sa ghost rustling in the dark. That is why I wante to show you my house. To tell you who we are. S that we would know. What to do.

And now my story's done. I never dreame I'd be so tired! But I wanted us to hear it. Peop don't get to hear stories much anymore, an that's a shame. Mine even has a moral, just th way a story should.

Tired . . . I really am, you know. It takes it o of you, showing a house to strangers. And plan ning to go . . . to some faraway place. A journe . . . out of here. That would be nice. Peaceful and . . . nice. Don't you think? I feel as if haven't slept for a long time. I haven't, yo know. I haven't slept for nearly a year.

I've got them all in some folder somewhere going back ten years.

Here's a question for you. If you were a ghos if you were a ghost in this house, if you wer dead and came to live in this house, wher would you hide? In the attic? Or in the cellar?

Watch it. Watch your head.

TOP OF THE STAIRS

Back from the dead. Oh, look: it's dark out Imagine.

FRONT HALL

Your coat. Have I said how much admire it? I need a new spring coa myself, mine's practically a rag. I'll jus put the porch light on for you. They say the weather's going to be a little warmer tomor row: sun mixed with clouds. Last time they said that, it rained for two days. I'm hoping my jonquils will pull through. I ought to tell you that someone's coming to see the house tomor row at four, or is it four-thirty: just for you to know. You think it over. Think over what we talked about, down there. I'm sure you'll make the right decision. And I meant what I said about the appraisal: I won't budge. Not a penny less, not a penny more. You let me know. I've lived here a long time, and now I don't want to live here anymore. You let me

DR. DAEDALUS

A radical plastic surgeon wants to give you wings

By Lauren Slater



PART 1: BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE

Joe Rosen, plastic surgeon at the renowned Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, and by any account an odd man, has a cold. But then again, he isn't sure it's a cold. "It could be anthrax," he says as he hurries to the car, beeper beeping, sleet sleeting, for it's a freezing New England midwinter day when all the world is white. Joe Rosen's nose is running, his throat is raw, and he's being called into the ER because some guy made meat out of his forefinger and a beautiful teenager split her fine forehead open on the windshield of her SUV. It seems unfair, he says, all these calls coming in on a Sunday, especially because he's sick and he isn't sure whether it's the flu or the first subtle signs of a biological attack. "Are you serious?" I say to him. Joe Rosen is smart. He graduated cum laude from Cornell and got a medical degree from Stanford in 1978. And we're in his car now, speeding toward the hospital where he reconstructs faces, appends limbs, puffs and preens the female form. "You really wonder," I say, "if your cold is a sign of a terrorist attack?"

Joe Rosen, a respected and controversial plastic surgeon, wonders a lot of things, some of them directly related to his field, others not. Joe Rosen wonders, for instance, whether Osama bin Laden introduced the West Nile virus to this country. Joe Rosen wonders how much bandwidth it would take to make virtual-reality contact lenses available for all. Joe Rosen wonders why both his ex-wife and his current wife are artists, and what that says about his deeper interests. Joe Rosen also wonders why we insist on the kinds of conservative medical restraints that prevent him from deploying some of his most creative visions: wings for human beings, cochlear implants to enhance hearing, beefing up our boring ears and giving us the range of an owl; super-duper delicate tools to jazz up our vision—binocular, beautiful—so that we could see for many miles and into depths as well. Joe Rosen has ideas: implants for this, implants for that, gadgets, gears, discs, buttons, sculpting soft cartilage that would enable us, as humans, to cross the frontiers of our own flesh and energy. It's something altogether . . . what? Something other.

And we're in the car now, speeding on slick roads toward the hospital, beeper beeping, sleet sleeting, passing cute country houses with gingerbread trim, dollops of smoke hanging above bright brick chimneys; his New Hampshire town looks so sweet. We pull into the medical center. Even this has a slight country flair to it, with gingham curtains hanging in the rows of windows. We skid. Rosen says, "One time I was in my Ford Explorer with my daughter, Sam. We rolled, and the next thing I knew we were on the side of the highway, hanging upside down like bats." He laughs.

We go in. I am excited, nervous, running by his bulky side with my tape recorder to his mouth. A resident in paper boots comes up to us. He eyes the tape recorder, and Rosen beams. Rosen is a man who enjoys attention, credentials. A few days ago he boasted to me, "You shouldn't have any trouble with the PR people in this hospital. I've had three documentaries made of me here already."

Lauren Slater is the author of Prozac Diary, Welcome to My Country, *and* Lying.

"T BODY IS A CONDUIT FOR THE SOUL,"
EN "WHEN YOU CHANGE WHAT YOU
K LIKE, YOU CHANGE WHO YOU ARE"



very fast. "I guess I'm not

taries were just a tall tale.

the tape recorder, peers at me. "They're doing a

"Joe is a crazy man, a nutcase," the resident announces, but there's affection in his voice.

"Why the beeps?" Rosen asks.

"This guy, he was working in his shop, got his finger caught in an electric planer . . . The finger's hamburger," the resident says. "It's just

We go to the carpenter's cubicle. He's a man with a burly beard and sawdust-caked boots. He lies too big for the ER bed, his dripping finger held high in the air and splinted. It does

I watch Rosen approach the bed, the wound.

cashmere scarf. As a plastic surgeon, he thinks

Hip Surgery" or "Rhinoplasty for t
m. He is known in

states t

nk that's

The carpenter nods. Rosen has said nothin
really reassuring, but his tone is soothing, h
voice rhythmic, a series of stitches that promi
es to knit the broken together.

We leave the carpenter. Down the hall, th
teenage beauty lies in still more serious cond
tion, the rent in her forehead so deep we ca
see, it seems, the barest haze of her brain.

"God," whispers Rosen as we enter the room
"I dislike foreheads. They get infected so easily

He touches the girl. "You'll be fine," he say
Just sew you up and let nature take its course."

I think these are odd, certainly unexpecte
words coming from a man who seems so relen
lessly anti-nature, so visionary and futuristic i
his interests. But then again, Rosen himself
down, smoke-and-mirrors sort of surgeon
hanging in his curious cave, a black bat.

"I like this hospital," Rosen announces t
me as we leave the girl's room. "I like its MR
machines." He pauses.

"I should show you a real marvel," he sud
denly says. He looks around him. A nurse rush
es by, little dots of blood on her snowy smock
"Come," Rosen says.

We ride the elevator up. The doors whispe
open. Outside, the sleet has turned to snow
falling fast and furious. The floor we're on
ominously quiet, as though there are no pa
tients here, or as though we're in a morgue
Rosen is ghoulish and I am suddenly scared.
don't know him really. I met him at a medical
ethics convention at which he discussed teach
ing *Frankenstein* to his residents and elaborated,
with a little light in his eye, on the inherent
beauty in hybrids and chimeras, if only w
could learn to see them that way. "Why do w
only value the average?" he'd asked the audi
ence. "Why are plastic surgeons dedicated onl
to restoring our current notions of the conven
tional, as opposed to letting people explore,
they want, what the possibilities are."

Rosen went on to explain other things at tha
conference. It was hard for me to follow his train
of thought. He vacillates between speaking clear
ly, almost epically, to mumbling and zigzagging and
scratching his nose. At this conference he kan
groo-leapt from subject to subject: the army
biowarfare, chefs with motorized fingers that could
whip eggs, noses that doubled as flashlights, sol
diers with sonar, the ocean, the monsters, the
marvels. He is a man of breadth but not necessarily
depth. "According to medieval man," Rosen said
to the convention, finally coming clear, "a mon
ster is someone born with congenital deformities
A marvel," he explained, "is a person with animal
parts—say, a tail or wings." He went on to show
us pictures, a turn-of-the-century newborn hand

T

ih syphilitic sores all over it, the fingers webbed
way that might have been beautiful but not
ne, the pearly skin stretched to rivet-nothing
the crotch of each crooked digit.

And the floor we're on now is ominously
et, except for a hiss somewhere, maybe some
ike somewhere, with a human head. We
lk for what seems a long time. My rope
p order sucks up the silence.

Rosen turns, suddenly, and with a flourish
rts the curtains of a cubicle. Before me,
nding as though he were waiting for our ar-
al, is a man, a real man, with a face beyond
scription. "Sweeny," Rosen says, gesturing
and the man, "has cancer of the face. It ate
rough his sinus cavities, so I scraped off his
ce, took off his tummy fat, and made a kind
well, a new face for him out of the stomach.
eeny, you look good!" Rosen says.

Sweeny, his new face, or his old stomach,
zing and swollen from this recent, radical
gery, nods. He looks miserable. The belly-
e sags, the lips wizened and puckered like an
us, the eyes in their hills of fat darting fast
d frightened.

"What about my nose?" Sweeny says, and
en I notice: Sweeny has no nose. The cancer
that along with the cheeks, etc. His is just
ful. "That comes next. We'll use what's left
your forehead." A minute later, Rosen turns
me and observes that pretty soon women
ll be able to use their buttocks for breast im-
nts. "Where there's fat," Rosen says, "there
possibilities."

The coffee is hot and good. We drink it in
the hospital cafeteria while we wait for
the weather to clear. "You know," Rosen
ys, "I'm really proud of that face. I didn't fol-
w any protocol. There's no textbook to tell
u how to fashion a face eaten away by cancer.
astic surgery is the intersection of art and sci-
ce. It's the intersection of the surgeon's imagi-
tion with human flesh. And human flesh,"
sen says, "is infinitely malleable. People say
smetic surgery is frivolous—boobs and noses
t it's so much more than that. The body is a
nduit for the soul, at least historically speak-
g. When you change what you look like, you
ange who you are."

I nod. The coffee, actually, is too damn hot.
he delicate lining of skin inside my mouth
rts to shred. The burn-pain distracts me. I
ve temporarily altered my body, and thus my
nd. For just one moment, I am a burned-girl,
t a writer-girl. Rosen may be correct. With
y tongue I thick the loose skin, picture it pink
d silky, on fire.

Continued on page 127

Yes, plastic surgery is not just boobs and noses. It is textbooks not tomes—thick, dense, and sick, no matter what it opens up to: images of striated muscle excised from its moorings, bone—white, coral, rum rich—elongated by the doctor's finest tools. Plastic surgery, as a medical specialty, is very confusing. It aims, on the one hand, to restore deformities and, on the other hand, to alter the normal. Therefore, the patients are a motley crew. There is the gorgeous blonde with the high sprayed helmet of hair who wants a little tummy tuck, even though she's thin, and then there is the Apert Syndrome child, the jaw so foreshortened the teeth cannot root in their sockets. Plastic surgery—like Rosen, its premier practitioner—is flexible, high-minded, and wide-ranging, managing to be at once utterly necessary and ridiculously frivolous, all in the same breath, all in the same scalpel.



According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, in 2004 more than 1.5 million people had cosmetic surgery performed by board-certified plastic surgeons, an increase of 227 percent since 1992. (These numbers do not include medically necessary or reconstructive surgeries.) The five most popular procedures were liposuction (229,588), breast augmentation (187,755), eyelid surgery (172,244), the just-available Botox injections (118,452), and face lifts (70,882). Most cosmetic surgeries are performed on women, but men are catching up: the number of men receiving nose jobs—the fifth most popular procedure—has increased 141 percent since 1997. The vast majority of patients are white, but not necessarily wealthy. A 1994 study found that 65 percent of cosmetic-surgery patients had a family income of less than $50,000, even though neither state nor private health insurance covers the cost of cosmetic surgeries. These figures alone point to the tremendous popularity and increasing acceptance of body alteration, and suggest that the slippery slope from something as bizarre as eyelid tucks to something

still more bizarre, like wings, may be shorter than [illegible]

Hair-implant surgery is ancient, dating back to 800 B.C., when hieroglyphics describe crude skin grafts. Rosen once explained to me that plastic surgery started as a means to blur racial differences. "A long time ago," he'd said, "Jewish slaves had clefts in their ears. And some of the first plastic-surgery operations were to remove those signs of stigma."



One history book mentions the story of a doctor named Joseph Dieffenbach and a man with [illegible] facial problems. This man had the sunken nose of syphilis, a disease widely associated with immorality. Dieffenbach, one of the fathers of plastic surgery, so the story goes, devised a gold rhinoplasty bridge for this marginal man, thus giving him, literally, a Midas nose and proving, indeed, that medicine can make criminals kings.

As a field, plastic surgery is troubled, insecure. It is a lot like psychiatry, or dentistry, in its [illegible] oral specialty of medicine. In fact, the first plastic-surgery association, started in 1921, was an offshoot of oral practitioners. Read: teeth people. Not to digress, but the other day I woke up with a terrible toothache and rushed in to see a dentist. I said to him, just to be friendly, "What sort of training do you need for your profession?" He said, "You need A LOT of training, believe me. I trained with the same guys who cure your cancer, but I don't get the same respect."

I wonder if Rosen ever feels like my dentist, and if that's why he's so grandiose, like the little boy who is a bully. Sander Gilman, a cultural critic of plastic surgery, writes that, in this group of doctors, there are a lot of big words thrown around in an effort to cover up the sneaking suspicion that their interventions [illegible] not important. One is not ever supposed to [illegible] "nose job"; it's called rhinoplasty. Gilman writes, "The lower the perceived status of a field . . . the more complex and 'scientific' the discourse of the field becomes."

Of course, I rarely meet a doctor who does [illegible] like jargon and doesn't like power. Rosen may be different only in intensity. "I'm not a cosmetic surgeon," Rosen keeps repeating to [illegible]

He says, "Really, there's no such thing as just cosmetic surgery. The skin and the soul are one." On paper, maybe, this comment seems a little overblown, but delivered quietly, in a New England town when all the world is white, it has its lyrical appeal.

When Rosen cries out that he's not "just a cosmetic surgeon," he's put his finger on a real conflict in his field. Where does necessary reconstruction end and frivolous intervention begin? Are those interventions really frivolous, or are they emblematic of the huge and sometimes majestic human desire to alter and transcend? If medicine is predicated upon the notion of making the sick well, and a plastic surgeon operates on someone who is not sick, then can the patient truly be called a patient and the doctor a doctor? Who pays for this stuff, when, where, and how? These are the swirling questions. Over a hundred years ago Jacques Joseph, another of plastic surgery's founding fathers, wrote that beauty was a medical necessity because a person's looks can create social and economic barriers. Repairing the deformity, therefore, allows the man to function in a fully healthy way in society. Voilà. Function and form, utilitarianism and aestheticism, joined at the hip, grafted together: skin tight.

Perhaps we can accept Joseph's formulation. Okay, we say. Calm down. We say this to the hopping, hooting cosmetic surgeons who want to stake out their significance. Okay, I respect you. I'd like to say this to Rosen, but I can't. Rosen's ideas and aspirations, not to mention his anthrax concerns, go beyond what I am comfortable with, though I can't quite unearth the architecture of my concerns. After all, who doesn't want to hurt anyone. Maybe it's because Rosen isn't just talking about everyday beauty and its utilitarian aspects. He is talking EXTREME. When Rosen thinks of beauty, he thinks of the human form stretched on the red-hot rack of the imagination, which is mired in medieval texts and books on trumpeter swans. At its outermost limits, beauty becomes fantastical, perhaps absurd. Here is where Rosen rests. He dreams of making wings for human beings. He has shown me blueprints, sketches of the scalpel scissoring into skin, stretching flaps of torso fat to fashion gliders pi[illegible]

h rib bone. When the arm stretches, the glid- unfold, and human floats on currents of air. Is serious? At least partially. He gives lectures to dical students on the meaning of wings from an gineering perspective, a surgeon's perspective, d a patient's perspective. He has also thought of chlear implants to enhance normal hearing, fins make us fishlike, and echolocation devices so at we can better navigate the night. He does t understand the limits we place on hands. He ce met a Vietnamese man with two thumbs on e hand. This man was a waiter, and his two mbs made him highly skilled at his job. "Now," s Rosen, "if that man came to me and said, 'I nt you to take off my extra thumb,' I'd be al- ved, but I wouldn't be allowed to put an extra mb on a person, and that's not fair."

We can call Rosen ridiculous, a madman, a nster, a marvel. We could dismiss him as a chno geek or a fool or just plain immature. t then there are the facts. First of all, Rosen an influential man, an associate professor of gery at Dartmouth Medical School and the ector of the Plastic Surgery Residency Pro- m at the medical center. He was senior fel- y at the C. Everett Koop Institute from 1997 1998, and he has also served on advisory nels for the navy and for NASA's Medical re for the Mission to Mars, 2018. Rosen nsults for the American Academy of Sci- ces committee on the role of virtual-reality hnology, and he is the former director of the partment of Defense's Emerging Technology reats workforce. In other words, this is n taken seriously by some serious higher- s. "Echolocation devices," Rosen explains, nplanted in a soldier's head, could do a lot to hance our military capacity." And this isn't st about the army's fantasies of the perfect ldier. Rosen travels worldwide (he gave over dozen presentations last year) and has had bstantial impact not only scalpeling skin but luencing his colleagues' ethics in a myriad of ys. "He has been essential in helping me to nceptualize medicine outside of the box," ys Charles Lucey, MD, a former colleague of osen's at the Dartmouth Medical School. hn Harris, a medical-ethics specialist in anchester, England, writes in *Wonderwoman d Superman* that "in the absence of an argu- ent or the ability to point to some specific rm that might be involved in crossing ecies boundaries, we should regard the objec- ns *per se* to such practices . . . as mere and tuitous prejudice." Rosen himself says, "Be- ve me. Wings are not way off. It is not a bad dea. Who would have thought we'd ever agree hold expensive, potentially dangerous ra- oactive devices up to our ears for hours on d, day after day, just so we could gossip

That's cell phones for you," he says. And smiles.

Rosen has a nice smile. It's, to be sure, a lit- tle boyish, but it's charming. Sometimes Rosen is shy. "I mumble a lot," he acknowledges. "I don't really like people. I don't really like the present. I am a man who lives in the past and in the future only."

Now we leave the emergency room. The snow has stopped. The roads are membraned with ice.

WHEN ROSEN THINKS OF BEAUTY, HE THINKS OF THE HUMAN FORM STRETCHED ON THE RED-HOT RACK OF HIS IMAGINATION

The sun is setting in the New Hampshire sky, causing the hills to sparkle as though they're full of little lights and other electric things. We drive back to his house, slowly. The emergencies are over, the patients soothed or suffering, he has done what can be done in a day, and still his nose runs. He coughs into his fist. "Truth be told," he says to me, "I didn't start out wanting to be a surgeon, even though I always, ALWAYS, had big ideas. In kindergarten, when the other kids were making these little ditsy arts-and-crafts projects, I was building a room-size Seventh Fleet ship." He goes on. As a child he wanted to be an artist. In high school he became obsessed with Picasso's *Guernica* and spent months trying to replicate it in the style of Van Gogh. As a freshman at Cornell, he made a robotic hand that could crack his lobster for him, and from then on it was hands, fingers, knees, and toes. His interests in the technical aspects of the body drew him away from the arts and eventually into medical school, which was, in his mind, somewhere between selling out and moving on.

We pull into his driveway. Rosen lives in a sprawling ranch-style house. He has a pet hen, who waits for us in the evergreen tree. His second wife, Stina Kohnke, is young and, yes, attractive. I'm afraid to ask how old she is; he looks to be at least fifty-three and she looks twenty-three, though maybe that's beside the point. Nevertheless, it all gets thrown into my mental stew: grandiose man, military man, medicine man, wants to make wings, young thing for a mate. Rooster and hen. Maybe there is no story here. Maybe there's just parody. All breadth, no depth. Except for this. Everyone I tell about Rosen and his wings, in *fin de siècle* mind, widens his or her eyes, leans forward, and says, "You're kidding." People want to hear more. *I* want to hear more. His ideas of altering the human form are repugnant and delicious, and that's a potent combi-

Rosen and his wife have invited me for dinner. I accept. Stina is an artist. Her work is excellent. "Joe is an inspiration for me," she says. "He brings home pictures of his patients, [illegible] clutching, reaching, in an agony of stiffness. She [illegible] You go to open the breadbox, the medicine cabinet, the desk drawer, and you have to touch these things. It's at once creepy and very beautiful.

We sit at their stone dining-room table. Behind [illegible] fish. Cacti, pink and penile, thrust their way into the odd air. Stina, homesick for her native California, has adorned the living room with paper palm trees and tiny live parakeets. We [illegible] because we found in each other the same aesthetic [illegible] two people who could see and sculpt the potential in what others found just ugly."

"How did you two meet?" I ask.

"Oh, I knew Stina's sister, who was an art professor . . . That sort of thing," mumbles Rosen.

"I kissed him first," says Stina. She reaches across the table, picks up Rosen's hand, and wreathes her fingers through his. She holds on [illegible] conventionally pretty. She has a perfect Protestant nose and a lithe form, and a single black bra strap slips provocatively from beneath her blouse. Rosen, a man who claims to love the unusual, has picked a very usual beauty.

[illegible]

Before I know it they are both leaning forward, peering at my ears. "Oh, my God," says Stina, "you have the most unusual ears."

Now, this is not news to me. I have bat ears, plain and simple. They stick out stupidly. In the fifth grade, I used to fasten them to the sides of my skull with pink styling tape in the hope of altering their shape. I have always disliked my ears.

Rosen uncurls his index finger and touches [illegible] malformed rim. "You're missing the *scapha*," he says. "It's a birth defect."

"I have a birth defect?" I say. I practically [illegible] not to be defective. That's why I take Prozac every day.

"Joe," says Stina, "are those not the most amazing ears. They would be so perfect to sculpt."

"They're just a perfect example," Rosen echoes, "of the incredible, delectable proliferation of life-forms. We claim most life-forms gravitate toward the mean, but that's not true. [illegible] curve. You have beautiful ears," he says to me.

"I have nice ears." I say. "Really."

That is just one reason why I won't dismiss Rosen out of hand. Suddenly, I see my ears a little differently. They have a marvelous undulating ridge and an intricately whorled entrance, and they do not stick out so much as jauntily: they are ears with an attitude. Rosen has shifted my vision without even touching my eyes. He is, at the very least, a challenger of paradigms; he calls on your conservatism, pushes hard.

That night, I do not dream of wings. I dream of Sweeny and his oozing face. I dream he comes so close to me that I smell him. Then I wake up. Sweeny is very sick. He is going to die soon. Earlier in the day, I asked Rosen when and Rosen said, "Oh, soon," but he said it as if he didn't really care. Death does not seem to interest Rosen. Beauty, I think, can be cold.

PART II: MONSTER AND MARVEL

Today, Rosen and I are attending a conference together in Montreal. Here everyone speaks French and eats baguettes. The conference room is old-fashioned, wainscoted with rich mahogany, ornate carvings of creatures and angels studding the ceiling, where a single light hangs in a creamy colored orb. Around the table sit doctors, philosophers, graduate students: this is a medical-ethics meeting, and Rosen is presenting his ideas. On the white board, in bold black lines, he sketches out his wings, and then the discussion turns to a patient whose single deepest desire was to look like a lizard. He wanted a doctor [illegible] and scale his skin, and to put horns on his head. "You wouldn't do that, would you?" a bespectacled doctor asks. "Only," says Rosen, dodging in a fashion typical of him, "there was a lady in need of breast reconstruction who wanted blue areolas. What's wrong with blue areolas? Furthermore, rhinoplasty has not reached its real potential. Why just change the nose? Why not change the gene for [illegible] that all suspected geneticists will be?

n the surgery. Plastic surgery, in the future, be about more than the literal body. It can about sculpting the genotype as well."

The bespectacled doctor raises his hand. ould you make that man into a lizard?" the tor asks again. "What I want to know is, if a ient came to you and said, 'I want you to give , wings,' or, 'Split my tongue,' would you actu- do it?"

'Look," says Rosen, "we genetically engineer d. That's an issue."

'You're not answering my question," the tor says, growing angry. Other people are owing angry, too. "Do you see any ethical mmas in making people into pigs, or birds?" other attendee yells out. This attendee is ing a Yodel, peeling off the chocolate bark biting into a swirl of cream.

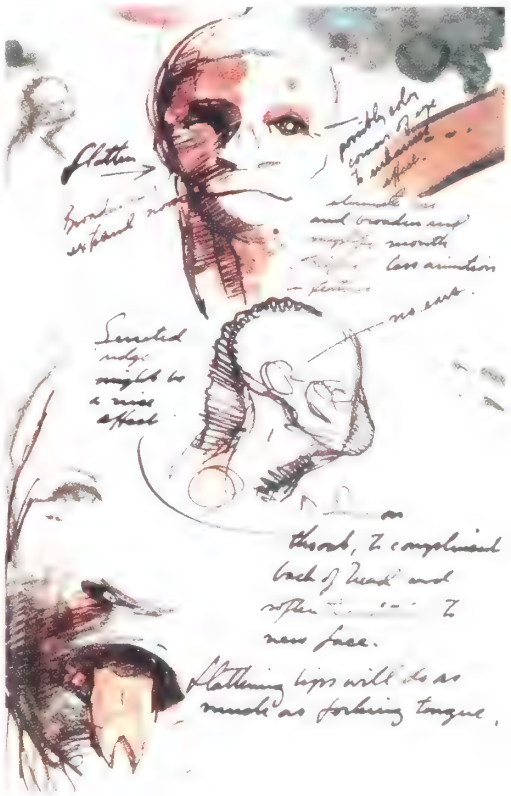
Rosen darts and dodges. "There is such a ng as liberty," he says.

'Yes," someone says, "but there's such a ng as the Hippocratic oath too."

This goes on and on. At last a professor of thropology says, "Just tell us, clearly, please. ould you give a human being wings, if the hical-ethics board allowed it?"

Rosen puts down his black marker. He rubs eyes. "Yes," he says, "I would. I can cer- nly see why we don't devote research mon- to it. I can see why the NIH would fund rk on breast cancer over this, but I don't ve any problem with altering the human m. We do it all the time. It is only our leo-Christian conservatism that makes us think this is wrong. Who here," he says, esn't try to send their children to the best hools, in the hopes of altering them? Who are objects to a Palm Pilot, a thing we clasp our bodies, with which we receive rapid ectronic signals? Who here doesn't surround emselves with a metal shell and travel at ath-defying speeds? We have always altered rselves, for beauty or for power, and so long we are not causing harm what makes us nk we should stop?"

For a group of intelligent people everyone looks ffled. What Rosen has said is very right and very ong, but no one can quite articulate the core nflicts. After all, we seem to think it's okay to use ication as a way of neuronally altering the brain, t not surgery. We take Prozac, even Ritalin, to lp transform ourselves, but recoil when it comes wings. Maybe we're not recoiling. Maybe wings just a dumb idea. No one in his right mind uld subject himself to such a superfluous and enuous operation. Yet socialite Jocelyne Wilden- in has dedicated much of her life to turning rself into a cat, via plastic surgery. She has had r lips enlarged and her face pulled back at the es to simulate a feline appearance. An even more well-known case is Michael Jackson, who has whitened himself, slimmed his nose, and undergone multiple other aesthetic procedures. The essential question here is whether these people are, and forever will be, outliers, or whether they represent the cutting edge of an even more popular trend. Carl Elliott, a bioethicist and associate professor at the University of Minnesota, recently wrote in *The Atlantic* about a strange new "trend" of perfectly healthy folks who desire nothing more than to have a limb amputated, and about the British doctor who has undertaken this surgery, believing that if he doesn't amputate the patients will do it themselves, which could lead to gangrene. Elliott wonders whether amputation obsession will morph into another psychiatric diagnosis, whether, like hysteria, it will "catch on." The metaphor of contagion is an interesting one. Multiple personality disorder "caught on", hysteria caught on. Why then might not an unquenchable desire for wings start to catch on, too? In any case, we use medical/viral metaphors to explain trends, and, in the case of plastic surgery, we then use medical means to achieve the trend's demands.



Rosen himself now repeats to the conferees, "We have always altered ourselves for beauty or for power. The chieftains in a certain African tribe remove their left ears, while other tribes put their bodies through intense scarification processes for the sake of style. In our own culture, we risk our bodies daily to achieve status, whether it's because we're bulimic or because we let some surgeon suck fat from us, with liposuction. Wings will be here," Rosen says. "Mark my words."

He suddenly seems so confident, so clear. We should do this; beauty is marvelous and monstrous. Beauty is difference, and yet, to his patients in the ER just two years [illegible] kept saying, "Let nature take its course." Perhaps he is more ambivalent than he lets on.

Later that evening, over dinner, conferees gossip about Rosen. "He's a creep," someone says. "A megalomaniac," someone else adds. For a creep or a megalomaniac, though, he's certainly commanding a lot of attention. Clearly, his notions are provocative. "The problem with wings," says someone, "is that only rich people would have them, would be able to afford them. Our society might begin to see rich people as more godly than ever."

I order a glass of wine. The waitress sets it on [illegible] a tulip. With this wine, I will tweak not only my [illegible] well. My reflexes will slow down and my inhibitions will [illegible] sound either very stupid or very smart. Is this [illegible]



[illegible] aren't."

[illegible] one says. "Supposing a surgeon could make wings that were removable. Then would we be reacting this way."

"It's a question of degree," a philosopher pipes up. He is bald and skinny, with bulging eyes. "Rosen is going to the nth degree. It's not [illegible] or even questionably necessary alterations. [illegible] that wings are not necessary.

[illegible] might say to this. I can imagine that his answer might have something to do with the fluidity of the concept of necessary. Four years ago, cell phones weren't necessary. Now they seem to [illegible] wants wings, if wings won't hurt a person [illegible] they will help a person enjoy life and feel m[illegible] beautiful, and it, in turn, the winged woman [illegible] unacceptable, as we adjust and then come [illegible] love the sight of her spreading and soari[illegible] then isn't this excellent? Later on, in my ho[illegible] room, I stand in front of the mirror, naked. [illegible] body contains eons. Once, we were single co[illegible] then fish, then birds, then mammals, and [illegible] genes for all these forms lie dormant on th[illegible] cones of chromosomes. We are pastiches at [illegible] cellular, genetic level. This may be why I [illegible] open spaces, blank pages, why I often dre[illegible] my house opens up into endless rooms I [illegible] knew were there, and I float through them w[illegible] a kind of terror. It is so easy to seep, to[illegible] boundless. We clutch our cloaks of skin.

Back in Boston, I try to ascertain clearly, l[illegible] cally, what so bothers people about Rose[illegible] ideas. At first glance, it might seem fairly o[illegible] ous. I mean, wings. That's playing God. [illegible] should not play God. We should not reach[illegible] the stars. Myth after myth has shown us the d[illegible] gers of doing so—Icarus, the Tower of Babel; [illegible] solute power corrupts absolutely. Bill Joy, c[illegible] scientist at Sun Microsystems, says, as our te[illegible] nological capabilities expand, "a sequence [illegible] small, individually sensible advances leads to [illegible] accumulation of great power and, concomitan[illegible] great danger." Rosen's response to this: "So [illegible] we supposed to stop advancing? And who [illegible] it's bad to play God? We already alter the co[illegible] of God's 'will' in hundreds of ways. When we [illegible] antibiotics to combat the flu, when we figure [illegible] a way to wipe smallpox off the very face of [illegible] earth, surely we're altering the natural cours[illegible] things. Who says the natural course of thin[illegible] even right? Maybe God isn't good."

The second objection might have to do with [illegible] moral imperatives. Mary Do[illegible] wrote in her influential anthropological study *[illegible]rity and Danger* that human beings have a n[illegible] al aversion to crossing categories, and that w[illegible] we do transgress we see it as deeply dirty. In [illegible] words, sins in themselves are not dirty [illegible] when you place them on the dining-room t[illegible] they are. When you talk about crossing specie[illegible] ther at the genetic or the anatomical level, yo[illegible] mucking about in long-cherished categories [illegible] reflect our fundamental sense of cleanliness [illegible] aesthetics. Rosen's response to this, when I [illegible] at him in our next meeting: "Who says ta[illegible] are anything but prejudice at rock bottom? Jus[illegible] cause it feels wrong doesn't mean it is. To a l[illegible] people, racial intermingling and miscegena[illegible] feel wrong, but to me they're fine. I'm not a r[illegible] and I'm not a conservative."

The third objection I can come up with [illegible]

o with the idea of proteanism. Proteus, a mi
mythological figure, could shape-shift at
l, being alternately a tiger, a lizard, a fire, a
d. Robert Lifton, one of, I think, the truly
p thinkers of the last century, has explored in
volumes how Proteus has become a symbol
human beings in our time. Lacking tradi-
s, supportive institutions, a set of historically
ted symbols, we have lost any sense of coher-
e and connection. Today it is not uncom-
n for a human being to shift belief systems
eral times in a lifetime, and with relatively
le psychological discomfort. We are
holics, Buddhists, reborn, unborn, artists,
dot-commers until the dot drops out of the
and it all comes crashing down. We move
We remarry. Our protean abilities clearly
e their upsides. We are flexible and creative.
the downside is, there is no psychic stability,
substantive self, nothing really meaty and au-
ntic. We sense this about ourselves. We
w we are superficial, all breadth and no
th. Rosen's work embodies this tendency, lit-
lly. He desires to make incarnate the identity
usion so common to our culture. Rosen is in
face making us face up to the fact that the
er and outer connections have crumbled. In
ability to be everything, are we also nothing?
For me, this hits the nail on the head. I do not
ect to Rosen on the basis of concerns about
ver, or of Mary Douglas's cross-category pollu-
theory. After all, who, really, would wings
sonably benefit but the window washers
ong us? And as for the pollution issue, protean
son that I am, I could probably adjust to a lit-
chimerical color. Rosen's ideas and aspira-
ns are frightening to me because they are such
id, visceral examples of a certain postmodern
perhaps, more precisely put, post-authentic
sibility we embrace and fear as we pop our
zacs and Ritalins and decide to be Jewish and
n Episcopalian and then chant with the
nks on some high Himalayan mountain via a
ap plane ticket we purchased in between jobs
just before we sold our condo in a market ris-
so fast that when it falls it will sound like all
he precious china plates crashing down from
cabinet—a mess. What a mess!

Over and over again, from the Middle Ages
when the theologian Pico wrote, in a direct
influential challenge to the Platonic idea of
ential forms—"We have given you, Adam, no
ge proper to yourself, nor endowment proper-
your own . . . trace for yourself the lineaments
your own nature . . . in order that you, as the
and proud shaper of your own being, fashion
rself in the form you may prefer. . . . [W]ho
n will not look with awe upon this our
meleon . . ."—over and over, since those
rds at least, we as human beings have fretted about the question of whether there is anything fixed at our core, any set of unalterable traits that make us who we were and are and always will be. Postmodernism, by which I mean the idea of multiplicity, the celebration of the pastiche, and the rejection of logical positivism and absolutism as viable stances, will never die out, despite its waning popularity in academia. Its roots are too deep and ancient. And there has been, perhaps, no field like modern medicine, with all its possibilities and technological wizardry, to bring questions of authenticity to the burning forefront of our culture. At what point, in altering ourselves, would we lose our essential humanity? Are there any traits that make us essentially human? When might we become monsters or marvels, or are we already there? I vividly remember reading a book by a woman named Martha Beck. She had given birth to a Down syndrome child and she wrote in a few chilling sentences that because of one tiny chromosome, her child, Adam, is "as dissimilar from me as a mule is from a donkey. He is, in ways both obvious and subtle, a different beast." Is it really that simple, that small? One tiny chromosome severs us from the human species? One little wing and we're gone?

ROSEN DESIRES TO MAKE INCARNATE THE IDENTITY DIFFUSION THAT IS SO COMMON TO OUR CULTURE

As for me, I am an obsessive. I like my categories. I check to make sure the stove is off three times before I go to bed. I have all sorts of other little rituals. At the same time, I know I am deeply disrooted. I left my family at the age of fourteen, never to return. I do not know my family tree. Like so many of us, I have no real religion, which is of course partly a good thing but partly a bad thing. In any case, last year, in some sort of desperate mood, I decided to convert from Judaism to Episcopalianism, but when it came time to put that blood and body in my mouth I couldn't go through with it. Was this because at bottom I just AM a Jew and this amness has profundity? Or was this because I don't like French bread, which is what they were using at the conversion ceremony? In any case, at the crucial moment of incorporation, I fled the church like the proverbial bride who cannot make the commitment.

I want to believe there is something essential and authentic about me, even if it's just my ears. And although my feelings of diffusion may be extreme, I am certainly not the only one who's felt she's flying too fast. Lifton writes, "Until relatively recently, no more than a single major ide-

ological shift was likely to occur in a lifetime, and that one would be long remembered for its conflict and soul-searching. But today it is not unusual

PSYCHIC SURGERY IS REALLY NEUROSURGERY, ONLY WHEN A SURGEON MODIFIES YOUR BODY SHE MODIFIES YOUR MALLEABLE BRAIN

for several such shifts to take place within a year or even a month, whether in the realm of politics, religion, aesthetic values, personal relationships . . . Quite rare is the man or woman who has gone through life holding firmly to a single ideological vision. More usual is a tendency toward ideological fragments, bits and pieces of belief systems that allow for shifts, revisions, and recombinations."

What Lifton has observed in the psyche Rosen wants to make manifest in the body. I ask Rosen, "So, do you believe we are just in essence proteam, that there is nothing fundamental, or core, to being human?"

He says, "Lauren, I am a scientist. My original interests were in nerves. I helped develop, in the 1980s, one of the first computer-grown nerve chips. The answer to your question may be in how our nervous systems operate."

PART III: THE PROTEAN BRAIN

First, a lesson. In the 1930s, researchers, working on the brains of apes, found that the gray matter contained neural representations of all the afferent body parts. Ape ears, feet, skin, hands, were all richly represented in the ape brain in a series of neural etchings, like a map. Researchers also realized that when a person [illegible] arm—say, the right arm—this portion of the neural map fades away. Sometimes even stranger things happen. Sometimes amputees claimed they could feel their missing arm when, for instance, someone touched them on the cheek. This occurred because the arm map had not faded so much as morphed, pushing its territory with the cheek map, so it was all confused.

It was then discovered, not surprisingly, that human beings also have limb maps in their brains. Neurologists conceptualized this limb map as "a homunculus," or little man. Despite my feminist [illegible], I immediately liked the idea of a little man hunched in my head, troll-like, banging a drum, grinning from ear to ear. Of course the homunculus doesn't look at all like a human; it is, rather, a kind of human blueprint, like the drawing of the house in all its minute specificity. Touch the side of your skull. Press in. Buried, somewhere near there, is a beautiful etching of [illegible] hand, arm, neural web-work and delicate, axonal tendrils designed to accommodate all the sensory possibilities of the prehensile object. Move your hand upward, pr[illegible] the now sealed soft spot, and you will be touching your toe map. Your eye map is somewhere [illegible] your forehead and your navel map is somewhere in your cerebellum, a creased, enfolded series of cells that recall, I imagine, ancient blue connections, a primitive love.

Today, Rosen is giving a lecture. I have come up to New Hampshire to hear him, and, unlike on the last visit, the day is beautiful and bright. Rosen explains how brains are truly plastic, which comes from the Greek root meaning to mold, to shape. When we lose a limb, the brain absorbs its map or rewires it to some other center. Similarly, Rosen explains, when we gain a limb, the brain almost immediately senses it and goes about hooking it up via neural representation. "If I were to attach a sonographically powered arm to your body," Rosen explains, "your brain would map it. If I were to attach a third thumb, your brain would map it, absolutely. Our bodies change our brains, and our brains are infinitely moldable. If I were to give you wings, you would develop, literally, a wing brain. If I were to give you an echolocation device, you would develop in part a bat-brain."

Although the idea of a brain able to incorporate changes so completely may sound strange, many neurological experiments have borne out the fact that our gray matter does reorganize according to the form and function of our appendages. Because no one has yet appended animal forms to the human body, however, no studies have been done that explore what the brain's response to what might be termed an "evolutionary insult" would be. Assuming, probably wrongly but assuming nevertheless, that human beings represent some higher form of species adaptation, at least in terms of frontal-lobe intelligence, the brain might find it odd to be rewiring itself to presumably more primitive structures, structures we shed a long time ago when we waded out of the swamps and shed our scales and feathers. Rosen's desire to meld human and animal forms, and the incarnation of this desire in people like the cat-woman and the lizard-man, raise some interesting questions about the intersection of technology and primitivism. Although we usually assume technology is somehow deepening the rift between nature and culture, it also can do the opposite. In other words, technology can be, and often is, extremely primitive, not only because it allows people a sort of id-like, limbic-driven power (i.e., nuclear weaponry) but also because it can provide the means to toggle us down the evolutionary ladder, to alter our brains, stuck in their rigid humanness, so that we become what we once were phylogenetically: tailed, winged, at last no longer landlocked.

All this is fascinating and, of course, unsettling to me. Our brains are essentially indiscriminate, able to morph—like the sea god Proteus himself—into fire, a flood, a dragon, a swan. I touch my brain and feel it flap. Now I understand more deeply what Rosen meant when he said, "Plastic surgery changes the soul." To the extent that we believe our souls are a part of our brains, Rosen is right. And, all social conflict aside, plastic surgery is really neurosurgery, because it primarily happens, at its most essential level, north of the neck. When a surgeon modifies your body, he modifies your oh-so-willing, bendable brain.

I get a little depressed, hearing this lecture. It seems to me proof at the neuronal level that we have the capacity to be, in fact, everything, and that is in some sense nothing. It confirms my fear that I, along with the rest of the human species, could slip-slide through life without any specificity, or "specificity." Last year, I had my first child. I wonder what I will teach her, what beliefs about the body and the brain and the soul I will hold. I think, "I will show her pictures of my ancestors," but the truth is, I don't have any pictures. I think, "I will teach her my morals," but I don't know exactly what my morals are, or where they came from. I know I am not alone. Like Rosen, perhaps, I am just extreme. Now I feel a kind of kinship with him. We are both self-invented, winging our way through.

Rosen comes up to me. He is finished with his talk. "So do you understand what I mean," he asks, "about the limitlessness of the brain."

"Does it ever make you sad?" I say. "Does it ever just plain and simple make you scared?"

Rosen and I look at each other for a long time. He does seem sad. I recall him telling me once that when he envisions the future fifty years out, he hopes he is gone, because, he said, "While I like it here, I don't like it that much." I have the sense, now, that he struggles with things he won't tell me. His eyes appear tired, his face drained. I wonder if he wakes in the middle of the night, frightened by his own perceptions. Strange or not, there is something constant in Rosen, and that's his intelligence, his uncanny ability to defend seemingly untenable positions with power and occasional grace. In just three weeks he will travel to a remote part of Asia to participate in a group called Interplast, made up of doctors and nurses who donate their time to help children with cleft lips and palates. I think it's important to mention this—not only Bin Laden, bandwidth, anthrax, and wings but his competing desire to minister. The way, at the dinner table, he tousles his children's hair. His avid dislike of George W. Bush. His love of plants and greenery. Call him multifaceted or simply slippery. I don't know. All I know is that right now, when I look at his face, I think I can see the face he once was, the Seventh Fleet ship, the wonder, all that wonder.

"Do you and Stina want to go out for dinner? We could go somewhere really fancy, to thank you," I say, "for all your time."

"Sure," says Rosen. "Give me a minute. I'll meet you in the hospital lobby." Dr. Hitchcock takes off to who knows where, and I am alone with my singular stretched self on the third floor of the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. I wander down the long hallways. Behind the curtained cubicles there is unspeakable suffering. Surely that cannot be changed, not ever. Behind one of these cubicles sits Sweeny, and even if we learn to see him as beautiful, the bottom-line truth is that he still suffers. Now I want to touch Sweeny's dying face. I want to put my hand right on the center of pain. I want to touch Rosen's difficult face, and my baby daughter's face as well, but she is far from me, in some home we will, might hits that our family is, move on from sometime soon. I once read that a fetus does not scar. Fetal skin repairs itself seamlessly, evidence of damage sinking back into blackness. Plastic surgery, for all its incredible advances, has not yet been able to figure out how to replicate this mysterious fetal ability in the full-born human. Plastic surgery can give us wings and maybe even let us sing like loons, but it cannot stop scarring. This is oddly comforting to me. I pause to sit on a padded bench. A very ill woman pushing an IV pole walks by. I lift up my pant leg and study the scar I got a long time ago, when I fell off a childhood bike. The scar is pink and raised and shaped like an *o*, like a hole maybe, but also like a letter, like a language, like a little piece of land that, for now, we cannot cross over. ■

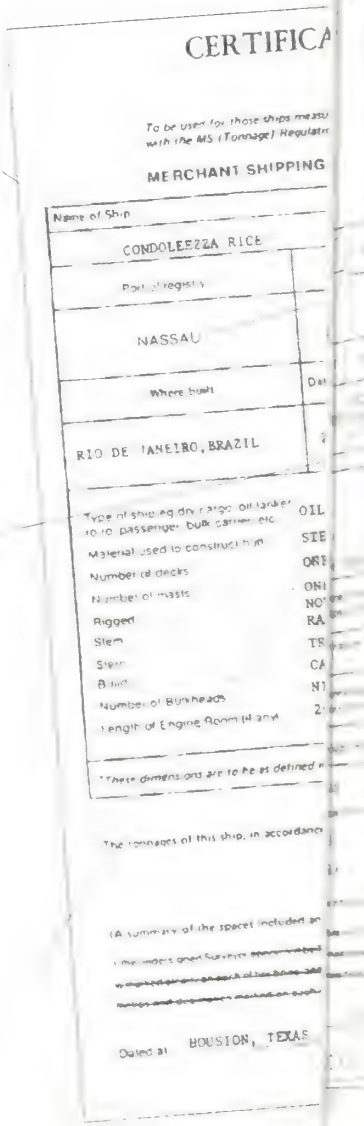


A CRUD

How the oil tanker *Condoleezza*

"We can't *live without oil*"—nearly any member of George W. [illegible] which seeks to place our favorite fossil fuel in the rarefied com- [illegible] tional Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, responding matter-of-factly to the revelation last summer that Chevron, on whose board of directors she served for nine years, had named an oil tanker in her honor. Capable of carrying 130,000 tons of cargo, the *Condoleezza Rice*, whose certificate of survey is pictured here, is one of more than 3,400 oil tankers operating worldwide; these tankers generally run from the Third World, where most oil is located, to the First World—presumably the "we" in Rice's formulation—where most oil is consumed. Seen from the stern of the *Condoleezza Rice*, the world would doubtless seem more distressed by its life *with* oil than by the thought of a life without it.

Just months after its 1993 certification, the *Condoleezza Rice* was sold to CalPetro Tankers, a third-party shipping firm, and immediately chartered back to Chevron. Since the *Exxon Valdez* disaster, this arrangement has become standard among large oil companies, which are desperate to distance themselves from major spills. A shortage of seaworthy tankers, combined with a surge in Western demand for oil, has contributed to a 250 percent jump in oil-shipping prices since last year—adding, by one estimate, 4¢ per gallon to the price of gasoline. Since 1998 this ship has been owned by Frontline Ltd., a Norwegian firm whose CEO, John Fredriksen, controls shipping properties estimated to be worth a billion dollars (a fortune built, in part, on his oil dealings with the Ayatollah during the Iran-Iraq war). Frontline's revenues nearly doubled last year, to $697 million; *Lloyd's List* calls Fredriksen "pretty well unstoppable" and compares him to a "10th century Viking voyager, snapping up plump prey wherever his dragon ship heaves over the horizon."


CERTIFICA

To be used for those ships measu
with the MS (Tonnage) Regulatio

MERCHANT SHIPPING

Name of Ship

CONDOLEEZZA RICE

Port of registry

NASSAU

Where built

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

Type of ship (eg dry cargo, oil tanker
ro-ro passenger, bulk carrier, etc

OIL

Material used to construct hull

STE

Number of decks

ONE

Number of masts

ONE

Rigged

NO

Stem

RA

Stern

TR

Build

CA

Number of Bulkheads

NI

Length of Engine Room (L) and

2

*These dimensions are to be as defined in

The tonnages of this ship, in accordance

(A summary of the spaces included an

Dated at HOUSTON, TEXAS

As mandated by a 1992 U.S. law, the *Condoleezza Rice* was built with a "double hull," wherein an extra sheet of steel protects the sea from the tanker's toxic cargo. Double hulls, though by no means a fail-safe measure for preventing spills, do represent a major improvement; but two thirds of oil tankers sailing into U.S. waters—and nearly that portion of tankers worldwide—still have only a single hull. Meanwhile, significant spills still occur almost monthly and remain largely out of the public eye. Last November, for example, when the *Westchester* ran aground near New Orleans, spilling over 500,000 gallons of crude into the Mississippi River, the story merited only a brief mention in most national newspapers, none of which bothered to report the American company on behalf of which the tanker carried its oil. (It was Capline, a pipeline co-operated by Shell and Texaco.)

KENESS

ap to its name, *by Ken Silverstein*



Form (a) - 2

Whether a sailing, steam or motor ship; if steam or motor ship, how propelled	MOTOR SHIP SINGLE SCREW
Name and address of builders	ISHIKAWAJIMA DO BRASIL–ESTALEIROS S.A. RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL
	Metric Units
	247.75
	48.50
	25.16
PARAGRAPH (a)	16.76
gers for whom accommodation nt of not more than 8 berths	NONE
passengers	NONE
en and apprentices for whom is certified	NONE

tions, 1982 under Part I

e (1969) are

n the International Tonnage Certificate (1969)]

AUGUST 19 93

Y. DAI

Like the *Westchester*, this ship is registered in the Bahamas third, after Panama and Liberia, among nations whose flags are most commonly flown by oil tankers. All three are considered "flags of convenience" (FOCs), a term for nations that open their registries to all comers; these nations tend to offer cut-rate fees and taxes, not to mention alluringly lax labor and inspection policies. Panama's licensing process is so slipshod that a union activist recently obtained, entirely through the mail (and with under-the-table payments), a certificate authorizing him to navigate a Panamanian-registered ship. The Bahamas have no minimum wage requirements for crews and no laws requiring recognition of trade unions; even unionized seafarers on its ships (who in this case hail from Russia, India, or the Philippines) are usually not paid more than $1,200 a month, a third of the wage aboard a U.S.-flagged ship. Frequently unaware of their rights, or too afraid to speak out, crews of FOC-registered ships often work up to sixteen hours each day and lack decent medical care.

The *Condoleezza Rice* is classified as a "Suezmax" tanker—a name derived from its breadth, the maximum permitted to pass through the Suez Canal. Suezmaxes are typically used to ferry crude oil out of resource-rich West Africa, where Chevron has invested $4.4 billion since 1990. The *Condoleezza Rice* stops frequently in the region: in Nigeria's Niger Delta, where continual oil spills have left the groundwater poisoned (and where a Chevron-hired "kill-and-go" security squad gunned down two protesters in 1998); in Angola, where Western oil money, often in the form of signing bonuses to the government, continues to finance a 25-year-long civil war; and in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which for three years has been embroiled in its own brutal war. Indeed, were Condoleezza Rice herself to retrace the path of her namesake, she might find the trip instructive as to the effects of the oil trade on "national security."

"I'm very proud of my association with Chevron, and I think we should be very proud of the job that American oil companies are doing in . . . making certain that we have a safe energy supply," Rice continued last summer, in her (and Chevron's) defense. Perhaps she did not care to contemplate her namesake's pernicious wake, as it were—the oil spills, labor exploitation, and political destabilization endemic to the global oil trade, not to mention the smog, global warming, and other consequences of the West's reliance on hydrocarbon fuels. At any rate, the mutual pride in Rice's association with Chevron appears to have dimmed; in late April, Chevron quietly renamed the ship, gracing it with the pleasingly generic moniker *Altair Voyager*. Henceforth, it seems, Condoleezza Rice's good name will have to serve the interests of Big Oil in person.

Silverstein is a contributing editor of Harper's *Magazine. His last piece for the magazine, "The Arch of Morris Dees," appeared in the November 2000 issue.*

NOW HEAR THIS

Listening back on a century of sound

By Alan Burdick

The archives of Smithsonian Folkways Records occupy an inner chamber of the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife Programs & Cultural Studies, an office tower two blocks from the Washington Mall. Exit the elevator, follow a carpeted, auricular corridor to a glass door with a keypunch lock, continue through and down a hall littered with the carcasses of obsolete computers, turn left at a bronze bust of Woody Guthrie, enter a small room. One wall is all steel shelves lined with vinyl LPs, thousands of them. Against another wall stand several tiers of audio equipment: amps, mixers, recorders, black boxes of [illegible] purpose woven together by [illegible] cables. The floor in between hosts three desks, countless stacks of papers and books, cardboard [illegible] with [illegible] compact discs—everything spilling into everything else, the whole place exhibiting the frailty and barely contained order of an overly active human brain.

That brain belonged most recently to Moses Asch, legendary music producer, ethnographer, social activist, and all-around audio visionary. In 1948, after several years working in radio, Asch started the Folkways Records label. Its modest mandate: to assemble a complete acoustic document of, well, everything. Lead Belly and Woody Guthrie, whom Asch was the first to record, became signatures for the label, along with other classic folksingers like Pete Seeger and Ella Jenkins. Eventually the Folkways catalogue came to embrace more than two thousand titles and an ever widening definition of what Asch called "people's music," everything from black gospel, mountain ballads, and sea chanteys to Native American ritual songs, Caribbean dances, and avant-garde poetry. Asked at one point what exactly the term "Folkways" encompassed, Asch replied: "Anything that is sound."

Just before his death in 1986, Asch agreed to donate his label to the Smithsonian, on one condition: every recording, no matter how obscure, must remain in print and commercially available. "Do you delete the letter Q from the alphabet," he once said, "just because you don't use it as much as the others?"

To Asch, Folkways was no mere repository: it was a bastion against aural oblivion. Times would change, distinctive sounds would disappear. And the more commonplace the sounds were—the more indicative of their moment—the more likely they would disappear without notice or acknowledgment. Accordingly, the catalogue came to include several dozen recordings of various sounds so mundane that few people but Asch would think to preserve them, sounds that I found myself absorbing with fascination for several days not long ago.

The twentieth century was built for the ear. Sound was first record[ed] in 1877 on Thomas Alva Ediso[n's] phonograph. The subsequent age [of] industry brought new sounds, new ways of capturing them, and an i[n]creasing urgency to do so. Forget t[he] images, forget the abstract paintin[gs] and stuttering newsreels, forget [all] the visual jetsam that millennial e[n]thusiasts recently forced us to rev[isit] it. To appreciate the twentieth ce[n]tury, it seemed to me, I should lea[ve] my eyes behind, plug in the hea[d]phones, and listen—to cable ca[r] calliopes, frog calls, Jupiter rocke[ts] surgical banter, steam locomotive[s] punch clocks: the work songs of th[e] whole carbon-based enterprise.

Historically, we are creatures [of] vision, slaves of the iris. The el[e]ments of our selves—our loves an[d] labors, arts and letters, our past an[d] its presentation—are assemble[d] largely through our eyes. "The keen[-]est of all our senses is the sense [of] sight," Cicero wrote. "Perception[s] received by the ears or by reflexio[n] can be most easily retained if the[y] are also conveyed to our minds b[y] the mediation of the eyes." Th[e] memory palace that Asch built, an[d] that continues to expand and ad[-]vance into the twenty-first century, is founded on the opposing premise that what matters most is what i[s] heard, not what is seen; that soni[c] memories are at once more prima[l] than visual ones (a dog recognize[s] his master's voice, after all, not th[e] photograph of him) and mor[e] evanescent

[illegible] published. Next seen by Ivana, Stratis and

"Sounds are like smells," Anthony ger, curator and director of the ithsonian Folkways Label since 38, told me in his office on my t afternoon there. "They're mendously evocative, but they d to get left out of discussions of tortes of museums." He ved in the general direc n of the Mall. "Walk und the Smithsonian: you don't hear anything."

Before joining Smithson Folkways, Seeger ran the hropological archives at Ina University, whose col tion of field recordings is sur sed only by that owned by Library of Congress. eger's mission, as he saw it, s to integrate the disparate di audio, video into a ified whole, what Seeger and colleagues referred to semi ously as the Archive of Hu Human Experience. Cen al to his scheme was a ntraption called the Aroma sk. Marketed briefly in the ly 1980s, the Aroma Disk s a tabletop odor factory. Pop disk—"Italian Bistro," say—o the toasterlike device, heat up, and, voilà, your living om would be transformed in a Florentine bistro. That was idea, anyway. The problem me when Seeger tried to play ck the archived odors.

"I played one, and this asy aroma started coming t," he said. "The smells re just oils that would coat erything else in the archive."

Sound, thankfully, is easier to pre ve and safer to revisit. Sound is en gy: anything that moves, however ghtly, emits it. A wing beats, a leaf tters, the surrounding molecules of or water reverberate with waves t reach the ear as a suit of noise. It can be seen, if it exists, it can be ard—you just have to listen close. With the proper set of amplifiers, r instance, you could tune in to the ons of Earth's outermost atmosphere they crackle and vibrate in the heat the sun. It so inspired, you might then record an entire album of it, like Smithsonian Folkways title C 5213, produced in 1955: *Ionosphere: Sounds Recorded Ionosphere Observations*. Or following the example of audio engineers at the Naval Research Laboratory in 1952, you might drop a microphone into the ocean and record *Sounds of the Sea, Volume One*. I don't know what I expected, but it wasn't what I heard. I listened with eyes closed, immersed. Rockfish, toadfish, sea robin, croaker—their eerie cries rose from the depths: rasps and bleats, roars and clicks, an aural corona as teeming and alien as the upper atmosphere.



In 1960, Albro T. Gaul, a former entomologist for the New York City Department of Parks, recorded for Folkways an entire album of the sounds of insects. Here is the desperate buzz of a fly caught on flypaper, here the horrible crisp of a mantis scraping meat from a fish bone. Here is the thrum of a flying honeybee, rapid as Gaul attaches tiny weights to the insect, slower as it depletes its eleven-minute store of glucose. For comparison's sake, Gaul recorded various insects in flight: mosquito, bumblebee, May beetle, warble fly, dragonfly—a panoply of roars and hums that brought to mind a Folkways recording from 1956, *Sounds of the Annual International Sports Car Grand Prix of Watkins Glen, N.Y.*

Smithsonian Folkways is both an archive and an active record label, which makes Seeger both a curator and a record manager. It is a peculiar combination, for which Seeger seems specially bred: he is a member of the extended Seeger clan of folk musicians (a nephew of Pete, Mike, and Peggy) and a respected scholar of ethnomusicology. Seeger's main task is to contain Folkways within manageable boundaries. He doesn't acquire many new recordings, despite the enticing offers that regularly cross his desk; his budget is limited and his staff is overworked. Whenever possible, he acquires by donation, and in bulk. "I collect record labels," he said. In the past ten years, Folkways has absorbed the catalogues of five smaller independent companies, including Dyer-Bennet Records (fifteen albums by 1960's folk minstrel Richard Dyer-Bennet) and Paredon Records, publisher of such leftist classics as *Che Guevara Speaks* and *I Hate the Capitalist System*. With the absorption of the Cook Laboratories and Sounds of Our Times labels, both founded in the 1950s by audio engineer Emory Cook, Smithsonian Folkways added German drinking songs and belly-dancing music to its catalogue, as well as valuable documents of pure sound like *Voices of the Sky: Propellers and Jets* and *Music of*

the Carousel. One of the most re-
released with some fanfare three
years ago: *Sounds of North American
Frogs*, compiled for Folkways in 1958
from the archives of the American

[illegible] talls to Jeff
[illegible] archivist. He
rolled in around noon—affable, with
[illegible] beard, and a head
[illegible]. He wore a green T-shirt
[illegible]. His
answering machine held a message
from a filmmaker. Does Folkways
[illegible] stones about chickens?
Place called back: Yes, three hun-
dred and thirty-eight. He hung up,
then looked over at me from behind
his computer.

"To me, the weirdest cut is on the
[illegible] of Medicine record."

He stood up from his desk and
went to the shelf, riffled through the
LPs, and extracted the title in ques-
tion, *Sounds of Medicine: Operation
Body Sounds*, recorded in 1955. The
jacket cover was orange and black
and was illustrated with a close-up
photograph of . . . something: stalac-
tites, it looked like, but biological
and internal, the insides of a lung,
maybe, or a clogged artery.

"Check out band eleven on this
one."

There were twelve tracks in all;
number eleven was entitled
"Sounds of the Bowels—A Normal
Hungry Man Smoking a Cigarette
Before Dinner." Who could say no?
I slipped the album from its sleeve,
placed it on the turntable, and set
the needle on the proper track.
[illegible] physician
[illegible] listening through a stethoscope
placed against a man's belly. "The
sounds that are heard here are the
normal contraction and movement
of the intestines." There followed
[illegible] of borborygmi—
groans, rumbles, gastrotectonic bur-
[illegible] plum or a volcano erupting under-
water. At one point I swore I heard
[illegible].

I skimmed the other tracks: "A
Woman with Valve Disease of the
Heart Before Surgical Operation,"
"A Man with Inflammation of the
Heart due to Active Rheumatic
Fever"—metronomic tales of ur-
gency and arrhythmia. It seemed
gratuitous, and slightly obscene, un-
til I read the liner notes and grasped
the purpose: the sounds were diag-
nostic. Normally blood passes
through the heart smoothly and in
silence. Diseased valves, however,
cause the blood to churn and eddy
with a murmur audible to an at-
tuned physician. An obstructed
bowel gurgles at an abnormally high
pitch; a bowel with peritonitis suf-
fers in ominous silence. According
to Hippocrates, an infection of the
pleural space surrounding the lung
produces the sound of "bubbling
vinegar." I was hearing code.

Inspired, I returned to an album
that had captivated me all morning:
Sounds of the Office, recorded in
1964 in the Warren, Pennsylvania,
offices of Eltronics Inc., by one
Michael Siegel, an audio engineer
with an ear for pending extinction.
What did they produce at Eltronics
Inc.? Who knows. What matters is
how they sounded—and that those
sounds, once prototypical, have
largely ceased to exist. The scratch
of pencil on paper, a metallic thunk:
"Time clock," the liner notes read.
A clacking and a rapid-fire mechan-
ical chugging: "Calculator." A deep,
thrumming hum: "Thermofax,"
whatever that device was. The
sounds unfurled into images, took
tangible shape, evoked their visible
source: the creak of cabinets made
unmistakably of wood, the clink
that announces—yesterday, today,
forever—the meeting of coffee mug
and spoon. At one moment in my
reverie—lost in a flutter of paper, a
rhythmic clacking of keys, the tiny-
bell ping of an approaching mar-
gin—the spell broke and I opened
my eyes to the cluttered modern of-
fice around me. My ears flooded
with banalities: computer keyboards
tapping in hushed monotone, tele-
phones buzzing like locusts. Quickly
I tried to shut them out, clamp my
eyes tight, turn the present off. *Qui-
et*, I wanted to shout. *I'm listening to
a typewriter.*

Now, with the coded message
from Normal Hungry Man's internal
organs echoing in my head, I tur
again to the "Manual typewrit
track on Siegel's recording. I
tened through again, then ag
and again, each time more clo
and with growing excitement.
keys made different sounds, I
ticed: some were higher or lowe
tone than others. Judging from
length of the subsequent pause
could distinguish punctuatio
commas, periods—from normal
ters. There was an overall,
cernible rhythm to the clackin
cadence entirely absent from the
botic "Old electric typewriter" t
later on the album. With the pu
tuation to guide me, I could m
out sentence length. I could, I
almost certain, decipher the w
being typed. They were the sa
words Siegel had spoken to the t
ist earlier on the "Dictation
transcription" track: "On behal
Folkways Records, I want to exp
my sincere thanks for the kind
operation you gave me in record
the sounds of the office . . ."

The machines were speaking to
What else to hear next but *Voice
the Satellites!*, recorded in 1958
Haverford College professor T.
Benham. By that year, five artifi
satellites were orbiting Earth. B
ham was one of thousands of sh
wave buffs avidly tracking the sa
lites' radio signals, analyzing
changing pitch and tone for indi
tions of the crafts' speed and whe
abouts, as one might judge the sp
and distance of a moving car from
Doppler effect. Sputnik, launch
years before I was born, was audi
again four decades after its deat
tinny whine that reminded me onl
all the Saturday-afternoon spaces
movies that formed my understa
ing of the 1950s. And here, speak
again, was Sputnik 2, launched in N
vember 1957 with the first live p
load, a young German shephe
named Laika. The Soviets had
tached a microphone over Laik
heart. Benham had caught its sig
too, and now it beat out at me: b
blip blip, a faint radio pulse, t
distant hammering o
bygone tool.

The ancient Romans envisio

human mind as a wax tablet, ory was the inscription en ved in it by physical experience at they envisioned was the nograph.

The first incarnation of Edison's nograph in fact was a rotating nder of tinfoil. (Wax soon re ed foil as the more sensitive rding medium.) You spoke into a thpiece, your words vibrated a ll metal diaphragm attached to a chisel or needle, which traced a s of indentations—more or less depending on the amplitude of sound—into the foil. Run it kward and your voice spoke k—thereby enabling, Edison sted, "the gathering up and re ing of sounds hitherto fugitive, their reproduction at will." nd without sight: for the first e ever, the voice was disembod- Edison toured with his inven , conjuring the voices of absent fors and public figures. Audiences ked as if to a seance. *Scientific erican* glowed: "Speech has be e, as it were, immortal."

And it was recorded speech, not sic, that most concerned Edison he early years of the phonograph. believed fervently in an afterlife l the possibility of communica n between the living and the d. A primary use for his inven , he wrote in 1878, would be "to serve for future generations the ces as well as the words of our shingtons, our Lincolns, our dstones"—as well as "the sayings, voices, and *the last words* of the ing member of the family." (Also h on the list: letter writing, dicta , and books for the blind.) Edi would eternalize the human ce, the word, the very soul. Alas, n the outset, mechanical memory ved only as trustworthy as the ginal gray matter. At five o'clock the afternoon of December 12, 90, a small group gathered at Edi 's lab to mark the first anniver y of the death of Robert Brown g. A white wax cylinder—the ository of Browning's voice, orded only eight months before death—was placed on the nograph. The ensuing soliloquy uld mark "the first time that

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NOTES FOR "LOTTERY"

DOWN: 1. h(and-r.)al; 2. n-a-N.A.; 3. [illegible] gag; 4. a-MM-O; 5. [illegible]; 6. (b)enu(sed); 7. Beel:*-(ebub's); 8. pal-(E-cate)rev.; 9. age-NYC*; 11. [illegible]; 12. [illegible]; 15. [illegible]; 17. [illegible]; 21. [illegible]; 24. [illegible]; 30. *; 32. AM-LD.; 35. hat-p(rev.).

Robert Browning's or any other voice has been heard from beyond the grave," as one audience member [illegible] Browning began reciting his work, [illegible] "Spoke echoed [illegible] prompted him to [illegible] Finally: "Then the gate shut behind us, the lights sank to rest . . . I—I am exceed-[illegible]"

By the late 1940s recorded sound had ceased to be a spooky novelty. It was an obsession, and a new medium, magnetic audiotape, [illegible] was born, amateur documentarians with portable recorders and a passion for ephemera. Seeking to capture "the audible expression of life around us," Tony Schwartz, a New [illegible] ried his microphone everywhere, recording everything: the sounds of a printer's shop, interviews with bus drivers, cocktail parties, jump-rope rhymes, conversations at an all-male luncheonette. From hundreds of reels of tape, he compiled numerous albums for Moe Asch and Folkways, including *New York 19*, a collection [illegible] code, and *1, 2, 3 and a Zing Zing Zing*, the songs and stoop games of [illegible] It was the era of the ear. Television was still a novelty; the home stereo reigned supreme. Sounds abounded and drew passionate recorders and listeners. In a 1956 interview with [illegible] his more avid customers. "It's pitiful, sometimes, if they've got it bad. Their eyes get glazed, they go white, their hands tremble. . . . As I watch [illegible] is a gentleman compared with the man who sells records."

[illegible] so pronounced that a clinical psychiatrist at Sainte Anne's Hospital, in Quebec, felt compelled to address it. "Many recording companies have started to cater to the vast demand for esoteric sounds from an eager public," wrote Dr. H. Angus Bowes. His article, "Psychopathology of the Hi-Fi Addict," appeared in a 1957 issue of *Diseases of the Nervous System*; it described the doctor's efforts to treat more than a dozen audio junkies. "Let me emphasize that there is nothing abnormal in the enjoyment of these novel noises. The audiophile may play them once or twice and then will usually shelve them for the diversion of visitors. The addict may play them ad nauseam. One I know continually plays a recording of the waves breaking on the sea shore. . . . I tried to help in his emotional growth by interesting him in Debussy's 'La Mer' but he found its shimmering crescendos too frightening." Among the favorite sounds of the hi-fi addict, adds Dr. Bowes, are those produced by "that aggressive phallic symbol, the train."

I confess that for some time I had looked forward to getting my hands on Smithsonian Folkways' titles F-6152 through F-6156: *Sounds of Steam Locomotives*, volumes 1 to 5. When I did, I devoted an entire afternoon to them. In 1952, Vinton Wight, a railroad aficionado from Colorado, realized with alarm that the age of steam engines was nearing an end. So he began recording it, ultimately editing his tapes into four [illegible] *Steam, Steel and Action* [illegible] *Clear Creek to Narrow* [illegible] *Heyday* [illegible] —that he convinced Asch to print. Fifty years later the sounds filled my headphones. Caressing my ears was the [illegible] of Union Pacific #9052, a locomotive with a 4-12-2 wheel arrangement, as it eases into the station in Lincoln, Nebraska. Now came #801, a high-stepping 4-8-4, hissing out of Omaha with passenger train #7. Every engine expressed a personality as individual as the men who drove and tended it. "If you have never heard an 0-6-0 switcher start out to do its evening chores," Vinton writes in the accompanying [illegible] Volume 4, released in 1958, was contributed by a retired Bell Telephone employee who found the train sounds on a competing label "too limited in variety." The first track opens with his quavering voice: "The [illegible] recordings were made [illegible] Harold S. Ludlow of Vermilion, Ohio, through which passes the main line of the New York Central between New York and Chicago. Every steam locomotive of the New York Central system has now been junked."

I was unprepared for the emotional weight of these recordings. They were ghosts like no others: lonely, haunting, they spoke of dark, rainy platforms, of aimless couplings and decouplings, of the vastness of plains and passengers hurtling toward unremembered ends. Proust describes rounding a bend in the road: he sees a stand of trees he has seen before, but whether he first saw them in a dream or in the distant real past, he can't say. "I watch the trees gradually recede, waving their despairing arms, seeming to say to me: 'What you fail to learn from me today, you will never know. If you allow us to drop back into the hollow of this road from which you sought to raise ourselves up to you, a whole part of yourself which we were bringing to you will vanish forever.'" But what ghosts were the train sounds to me? What memories were they evoking? I am too young for steam engines—barely old enough for manual typewriters, for that matter. Into whose past were these engines pulling me? I've heard steam locomotives before, of course, in films, on television. Was I resonating to a hand-me-down sound? And was that cinema sound ever real? Often as not these days the slammed door in Hollywood is not a door at all, merely the sound of a phone book dropped to the recording-room floor with a bang more convincing than the real thing. Perhaps I was not resonating to a true sound at all, merely to a simulacrum, to a studio sound jury-rigged from bastard noises.

Or perhaps, I'm thinking now, what vibrates in the listener is not some literal recollection of the sound's source but simply the memory of raptness. The most evocative sounds—field crickets, distant trains, the master's urgent voice—are sounds heard from afar, produced

ngs unseen; in the mind's eye they
e an absence. What you recall in-
ad is the listening. The message of
trees to Proust was not *Remember*
but rather *Remember that you once*
d us. Remember how. To hear is to
all every cherished moment of at-
tion, to experience again every
of hushed audition. What I heard
the Smithsonian was the passage
time: the heart-rending space be-
en one tick and the next, be-
en a sound and its echo. I heard
the eternal now, and in
that moment I was ageless.

The golden age of sound never
ded: it continues, occluded by the
ual hegemony. Technology pro-
les ever more sensitive methods of
ring, ever more accurate means
recording, and an ever changing
te of sounds to assimilate. One
en'ist has recorded the hiss of
ow on open water; another, the
nt and eerie murmurings pro-
ced by the aurora borealis. A
rd has developed an equation to
scribe the sound of rain falling on
ocean's surface, with it, he can
luce the size of the raindrops, the
ount of rainfall, and, ultimately,
progress of climate change. Ma-
ne biologists have discovered a
mpressed layer of seawater, deep
wn, that transmits the songs of
ales for thousands of miles along
length, like a transoceanic Dixie-
p telephone. (Navy submarines
ve employed it for decades.) With
e same low-frequency micro-
ones used to study earthquakes,
entists have found that elephants
ack the movements of other ele-
fants dozens of miles away through
dicate seismic sensors in their toe-
ails. I once spent a day with an en-
mologist who has discovered an
ay of albino insects that live only
the tunnels carved out by the un-
rground flow of lava. The insects,
re flecks of life, sing: not audibly
humans—the scientist could hear
e insects only after he placed
em in a balsa-wood sounding
x—yet very clearly to one anoth-
They live exclusively on tree
ots that hang, interwoven,
roughout the cave. Vibrating their
dies, the insects drum in string
calls and territorial
through what amounts to a web of
telegraphy. But the trees above are
being crowded out, or cut down, or
paved over, the scientist told me,
the roots of song are disappearing.

More sounds born, more sounds
passing, always faster than ever. I
find it impossible now not to dwell
on this: at my desk, in a meadow, on
the bus. Siren, blue jay, Greyhound:
which of these sounds will not exist
next century, next year, next week?

"Sometimes we play the sounds of
the typewriter to visiting school-
children," Seeger said to me at one
point. "They don't know what it is."

I had taken a break on my last af-
ternoon in the archives. Seeger and
I sat across the street, in the wood-
paneled dining room in the former
Smithsonian Library. Seeger is a
child of sound. At age one he was
carried in a basket by family mem-
bers to sing Christmas carols at
Lead Belly's apartment in Green-
wich Village. At age six he met
Woody Guthrie; he regularly ac-
companied Uncle Pete to the New-
port Folk Festival. In sixth grade he
bought a Folkways album of the mu-
sic of India; in eighth grade it was
African music; in ninth grade,
Japanese. "In college I decided that
there were so many Seegers making
a living by performing music that
I'd do something else," he said.
"Something fun, of course, so I be-
came an anthropologist who studies
music. I was interested in the rela-
tionship between what people be-
lieve to be the structure of their
universe—their cosmology—and
the music that they make."

Seeger's academic specialty is a
remote Amazonian tribe called the
Suya. On the wall of his office is a
photograph of him conducting field-
work: a balding, unmistakably white
man of middling girth, naked but for
his undershorts, he is painted and
beefeathered to resemble a hummingbird and is dancing in a line of na-
tive hummingbird men all a head
shorter than himself. The Suya,
Seeger learned, spend almost as
much time singing and listening as
they do hunting and gathering; aur-
al and even olfactory cues are more
central than visual ones to the Suya

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worldview. Seeger said: "You ex-

hierarchy of the Suya, Seeger discovered, is organized around the expression of sound. For example, adolescent men are permitted to sing tribal songs only partway through,

of men are permitted the full song and a relaxed tone. "How you sing signals who you are and your place in the community," Seeger said. Sound is the medium of Suya identity. One tribe member lamented to

Seeger was poking his salad with a fork. "I like sounds," he said. "The Sci-

Science of Sound recordings were well conceived, but we could do better today with higher fidelity. Insects, for example: I'd love to do more. But there's very good portable video now,

to a record company is now sent to National Geographic or some place like that. The real question is, what can sound tell us that other mediums can't?" Smithsonian Folkways hopes to tap into the National Air and Space

astronauts' voices, radio signals from gamma-ray bursters. At Cornell University, scientists are assembling an enormous archive of birdsongs and whale songs; some of those might find their way into the Smithsonian Folk-

"I hear new sounds all the time,' [illegible] teresting sound." He cocked his ear to the restaurant babble. "Of course, it's associated with having eaten well." The alarm on his wristwatch began beeping: time to return to the office and take a call from Paris. Seeger said, "I often [illegible] for it.

In 1861 a French anatomist named Paul Broca discovered that a filament of cortex in the left frontal lobe of

nated with its implications. "Eighty-two remarkable operations upon the brain have definitely proven that the part of the brain known as the fold of Broca," he wrote. In Edison's mystical cosmology, the human soul consists of a swarm of microscopic monads, or "life units": busy little homunculi that take up residence in the cerebral groove identified by Bro-

[illegible] little strip not much more than a quarter of an inch long," Edison wrote. "This is where the little people live who keep our records for

The vault of the Smithsonian Folk-[illegible] turned out, was not the [illegible] sounds of the century from vinyl [illegible] It was just the listening room, the read-only memory, open to visitors willing to make do with plastic copies. That room held a door to another room, the sanctum [illegible] reel-to-reel tapes, all stowed on mov-[illegible] temperature and humidity. These are the master recordings, the records that Jeff Place keeps.

It is all he can do to keep them. [illegible] of 1890s. It was the [illegible] pulled out an early album, a record-[illegible] played only with a cactus needle. "A metal needle on a metal disc: that doesn't sound too good." The [illegible] marvel capable of playing a record at any speed—74 rpm, should you need [illegible] those records whose speed and pitch change over the span of the disc.

[illegible] an irretrievable snippet of sonic memory. Place works with wrinkled reel-to-reels from the 1950s that can be played only with utmost care. Even the reel-to-reels from the 1970s are becoming sticky and un-

tion: a Farberware Convection Broil

Oven that sits on the floor near h desk. "Put the tape in the oven f [illegible] and the stickiness away, at least temporarily." Th long enough for Place to copy it i the latest recording format, dig Disc by disc, tape by tape, Plac [illegible] archive into the irreducible ch of ones and zeros. It is not a task undertaken lightly. Recorded memo weaken with repeated listen With each listen, each run of stylus, every rub of the tape h the original source is degra slightly, reduced further into p noise. To replay is to destroy.

What is the human ear to do? more we come to rely on mechan memory—the more we seek captive, squirrel away—the harde is to keep up with the contents. many ones and zeros are there mately room for? "Men are becom so vastly ingenious in finding means of magnifying and embalm every little ripple of human ene that we tremble for the con quences," the editors of *The Spect* lamented in 1888, a decade af Edison unleashed the phonograp "The earth will soon be made a m seum of odds and ends of form speech; and unless man sudde takes a great leap into a moral gre ness worthy of all this storing, may have future generatio drowned beneath the accumulat scraps of ancestral voices and expr sions. . . . Shall we not come to reg it as a singular virtue when m obliterate voluntarily traces of the selves which, instead of being use to posterity, would only serve t purpose of the dust in which use things are so often smothered? A we not discovering a great deal t many means of defeating the benef conferred by oblivion?"

Seeger said: "There was a m ment, when I was first invited to the archives, when I asked myse 'Why should there be any archives [illegible] out—the waves run out.' I spent few months thinking about it. But was impressed by the number people who come here to listen old sounds so that they could car them forward: Native American

'd say. We'd like to hear the ... se we can perform it again." ... x said that the past 'weighs like a ... mare on the brain of the liv... ' Just when they are about to ... storm themselves in an entirely ... way, they look to the past and ... nure up the ghosts of past eras. ... was absolutely right. At moments ... ocial transition, people are often ... ng to see the past in order to ... e forward. By saying that these ... ordings should be available, it's ... ause I think we have a role in ... ing the future."

.nd the sounds of typewriters, of ...ellers, of a coffee spoon clinking ...a cup—what conceivable role ...ht they have in shaping our fu... ? What are they saying as they ...ede? What part of ourselves do ... wish to bring us before it ... ... s entirely'

...eeger thought for a moment, then smiled. "I have no idea."

Memories fade, or flake away, are subsumed under the accumulating weight of new sensations and the relentless pressure to remember. No one knows where they go. Maybe they wait down there forever, planned to blossom again at the least provocation. Or maybe they just disappear, return to some molten state of cosmochemistry, relinquish their meaning. That's how it works in the natural world anyway. Locomotives, typewriters, calliopes, punch clocks: they all end up in the scrap heap, to be chewed up and recycled by other machines built expressly for the task and all with halos of noise all their own. Naturally, Folkways preserved these sounds too.

Sounds of the Junk Yard was recorded in 1964, the same year that *Sounds of the Office* was recorded, in the same Warren, Pennsylvania, by the same Michael Siegel. I took my seat, set the needle in the groove, and donned the headphones once more. A symphony of decomposition greeted me. The first minute and six-teen seconds were dominated by a harsh, gurgling hiss: "acetylene torch, cutting apart an automobile engine," the liner notes said. There was a brief pause, then a rattling hum and weighty clunks of metal falling against metal ("loading pick-up truck by hand with 400 lb. bales of aluminum scrap"). Then another [illegible] orchestra of clangs and thuds, scrapes and clatterings, threaded through by a faint buzz of human voices, all of it gaining speed and volume and reaching a momentary climax at minute twenty-two: one voice decipherable to me as "push it over, pull it out!"—then a deafening clatter as what sound like a thousand pots, pans, and Christmas ornaments (in fact, countless sheets of aluminum scrap) fall to a concrete floor.

At some point, attempting to match unfamiliar noises to the descriptions in the liner notes, I realized I was utterly lost. What I thought was Side 1 was actually Side 2: that paper baler was actually an alligator shear, the crunching of cartons in fact was a barrel being emptied of aluminum chips, the fiber drums were heavy pipes. And then, suddenly, I could hear it all: buzzing wasps, grinding [illegible] propellers, race cars, rockfish, thermofaxes, the singing ionosphere, and Laika's capsuled heart beating down through it.

In his waning days, Edison concocted a design, never realized, for the ultimate recording device, what he referred to as a spirit catcher. Held to the lips of a dying person, this supersensitive microphone would capture the sound of the human soul—that swarm of microscopic recordkeepers—as it departed the body. What did Edison suspect he'd hear? Angels singing? Lions roars? A murmur of librarians? Whatever it was, it swirled now in my headphones: the vital force, the xylem and phloem through the stem of life. I felt giddy. I was beyond sound, beyond silence. I laughed out loud. Place glanced over at me like I was nuts.

I started over. I flipped the record to the correct side and found my proper place in the liner notes. Only then did I notice the notes themselves. Siegel's descriptions were terse and time-coded; the segments stood apart from one another in stanzas.

[illegible]

I read them all, then read them again. They were astonishing little [illegible] It was as though I'd uncovered a map. Of what? To where?

Recently I spoke to Seeger on the [illegible] resigned from the curatorship of Smithsonian Folkways to take an academic post at U.C.L.A., where he has resumed his anthropological work with the Suya. (The new curator, Daniel Sheehy, is also an ethnomusicologist, and the former director of folk arts at the National Endowment for the Arts.) Seeger related the story of a Suya tribesman named Ntomi. One day, after a long illness, Ntomi woke to [illegible] his spirit. In a place like New York, a loss of one's spirit is an unenviable plight; among the Suya, however, it is a mark of distinction, for the loss enables the individual to commune with the spirits of the forest. Ntomi watched as animals removed their skins; he saw [illegible] the spirit of the armadillo and learned its song: "I am the armadillo, leaping, [illegible]" It was his song and his alone. Ntomi listened closely to the songs, learned them, translated them, and repeated them to [illegible] helped incorporate them into the tribe's ceremonial and social fabric. Ntomi became the primary source of new songs for the Suya, the only tribe member with an ear to the ground. Siegel, Seeger, Place, Edison, anyone with headphones or a functioning ear or a moment to be still and listen—they seek a similar knowledge.

[illegible]

I've pinned these koans on my wall [illegible] stones. I know now where sound goes when it dies. It comes back again, re-[illegible] ■

ENDLESSLY TALKING

After a century, Whitman's selected chat

By Guy Davenport

Intimate with Walt: Selections from Whitman's Conversations with Horace Traubel, 1888–1892, edited by Gary Schmidgall. University of Iowa Press, 2001. 312 pp. $40.00.

On Wednesday, the twenty-eighth of March, 1888, the twenty-nine-year-old Horace Traubel began taking down in shorthand what Walt Whitman had to say in the poet's upstairs bedroom on Mickle Street in Camden, New Jersey. "At Walt's this evening. Called my attention to an old letter in the Philadelphia Press describing a visit to Emerson with Louisa Alcott, and Emerson's senility." Whitman was sixty-nine, not yet wholly house[illegible] Traubel would go up to [illegible] about seven o'clock and leave at eleven. He kept to this routine until March [illegible], which by Whitman's [illegible] Traubel [illegible] pleural membrane made it too [illegible]

[illegible] tions as *With Walt Whitman in Camden* in 1906. A second volume came [illegible] another in 1914. Traubel died in 1919 (an even one hundred years after Whitman's birth—his last words "Walt says come on, come on"). It took thirty-four years for the fourth volume to be published, in a preposterously small number of copies, by the University of Pennsylvania Press. This is an all but undetainable book, and very expensive. Volume 5, edited by Horace's daughter, Gertrude, was published in 1964 by Southern Illinois University Press. Over the next thirty years, the same press brought out Volumes 6 and 7. Only within the last five years have Volumes 8 and 9 (the last two) been published by W. L. Bentley Rare Books. (This undertaking was [illegible] by the Fellowship of Friends, a California "cultural organization" whose leader has been [illegible] in the pursuit of Whitman ideals to provoke a lawsuit.) Ninety years and six different publishers for the conversation of our greatest poet to get into print!

Each volume runs to around 600 pages; that's 5,400 pages for the nine [illegible] fourteen volumes—were published only forty-four years after his death, though his *The Dispersion of Seeds* had to wait 130 years. Montaigne's travel journal lay in a trunk for several centuries.

The old Tolstoy was a great t[illegible] people came from all over to hear [illegible] "Yes," said his son to one of them, "but you don't have to hear him every [illegible] We know Blake through Crabb Robinson, and Tennyson (who liked to [illegible] all of "Maud" to his captive visitors through a generation of young [illegible] ers. Goethe's Johann Peter Eckermann, Samuel Johnson's Boswell, Benjamin son's Laird of Hawthornden: to a [illegible] these interlocutors we are grateful [illegible] leaving a record. There are people [illegible] membered only for their talk: the [illegible] finitely witty Sydney Smith, the champion gossip Samuel "Breakfast" Ro[illegible] and, to a substantial degree, Coler[illegible] and Oscar Wilde.

But four years of Walt Whitman's 1,458 evenings by the stove at [illegible] Mickle Street? I acquired the [illegible] three volumes of Traubel in 1[illegible] and found that they made good re[illegible] ing. When Volume 5 came out [illegible] 1964, I decided to read Traubel r[illegible] through—but needed Volume [illegible] which I hadn't known existed. F[illegible] ing it took a while. In fact, 6 thro[illegible] 9 were published before I trac[illegible] down 4 (and paid an arm and a [illegible] for it—the motherly bookseller [illegible] Santa Monica who sold it to me s[illegible] "You and the Library of Congress [illegible] now the only people who have [illegible] nine volumes"). So the elusiv[illegible] ended up being the last that I re[illegible] A long book must become a habit[illegible] kind of ritual (and reward) [illegible] from the day's other demands. [illegible] bedtime book, as it turned out, [illegible] many pages an evening as kept [illegible] attention.

Whitman's room became a little theater for two [illegible] tors. The house is sm[illegible] The windows remain closed (there [illegible] a fertilizer factory close by). Wa[illegible] old bones love heat: the potbelli[illegible] iron stove is kept glowing. Walt is [illegible] his rocking chair with a wolf hide [illegible] a cushion. What catches the eye [illegible] the floor—ankle-deep in lette[illegible]

nuscripts, newspapers, and books. ce, too. Beside the rocker is lt's "medicine," a bottle of bour- regularly replenished by Thomas gs Harned, one of Walt's extend- family of friends. This littered or, which always gave first-time itors, especially women, a jolt, is a e kind of housekeeping that psy- ology has no word for, as far as I ow. My bachelor uncle, oadus Dewey Daven- rt, kept house so (and s furious when a niece d I cleaned it up when was in the hospital for week). I have seen it in arlie Mingus's New rk apartment, a thou- nd opened Campbell's up cans covering the ole living-room floor, th a space cleared for ree chairs and Charlie's llection of Debussy cordings. And, for his- ry's sake, in an under- aduate's room in Adams ouse at Harvard.

Whitman's midden con- ined wonderful things, nd Horace was always ding letters from Emer- n and Tennyson in it, om the pre-Raphaelite illiam Michael Rossetti the poet and early pro- ment of gay-acceptance Edward arpenter. Walt claimed to be able to nd letters and manuscripts in it, but is was an idle boast. Twice sparks om the stove set fire to it. Yet Whit- an himself bathed daily and was icky about clean linen. Many re- arked on how sweet he smelled. He either smoked nor chewed tobacco. is patriarchal beard was always clean nd neatly fluffed.

Horace usually found him reading alter Scott or George Sand, both vorites, or newspapers. Following omradely kiss, Walt swapped news. good day would be one with a let- r from Maurice Bucke, the Lon- n, Ontario, doctor whose insane ylum Whitman had visited. There's an interesting film about is visit, *Beautiful Dreamers*, with ip Torn as Walt.) There were visi- rs to be told about: total strangers who disapproved of *Leaves of Grass* (at whom Walt would smile placidly, saying nothing), autograph seekers, old friends, neighbors, and, once, a "beautiful boy" who stared for a while and left in silence.

Horace and Walt met when Horace, fifteen, was carrying home a stack of library books. Walt, who knew no strangers, wondered aloud to Horace at how his age could read [illegible] so many books, or to carry such a load *that* way. Their paths kept crossing. On the Camden ferry, a passenger asked the adolescent Horace, "Say, bubby, is that Walt Whitman the man who writes the dirty novels?"

"Yep!" said Horace happily. "That's him."

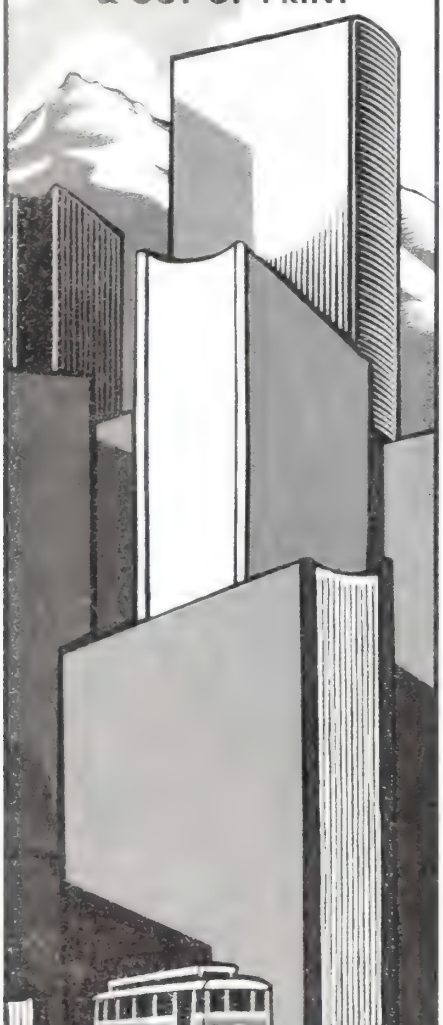
Once the evenings began, Horace gradually slipped into being Whitman's liaison with the world. He knew where to buy the broad steel-nibbed pens Whitman fancied. In the war you "wrote big" and clearly, to be read by lantern light in a tent.

Walt's Quaker clothes and hat were made—reluctantly—by a Philadelphia tailor; his stationery was cut to specifications. Horace learned how to handle such details. There were proofs to be fetched and returned (when Walt could be persuaded to correct them). Horace's father, a German lithographer in Camden, translated the letters Walt received in German and French. Horace fell into correspondence with Walt's English admirers. Being Whitman's confidant, secretary, and errand boy was obviously gratifying to a thirty-year-old autodidact, school dropout, and ardent Socialist.



After the Whitman years he became a newspaper editor and third-rate poet.

A biographer of Whitman, Gary Schmidgall, has now made a digest of Traubel: *In [illegible] Whitman's Conversations with Horace Traubel, [illegible]*. He does not lift out excerpts, as one might expect, but tells [illegible] Traubel said, what Walt said [illegible] own narrative and commentary. The large part of this [illegible], however, is Walt *verbatim*. Schmidgall has categorized his selections. "Peeves," "Famous Authors," and so on. The decision is an odd one: between reading Traubel whole and savoring choice [illegible] an [illegible] middle ground. One could, of course, make an anthology of whole evenings, with con-

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cise narrative bridges. The texture would be different all three ways.

Now that we have, after almost a century, Traubel's complete conversations with Whitman in Camden, and Schmidgall's selections arranged topically, is there any point in comparing them? Their difference is grandly obvious. For two hundred years people have exchanged in conversation their favorite ripostes of Samuel Johnson as recorded by Boswell. But reading Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides, with Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1785) and the *Life* (1791) is an *experience*. Reading Schmidgall's book is entertaining and informing, but it lacks (again, obviously) the tone and texture of the original.

There is a kind of plot, thoroughly Proustian (or Sternesque), to Traubel whole. On fourteen nights Walt promised to divulge a "great secret," deferring it to "some day—the right day." He never does. When Traubel presses him, he is "not in the mood to talk." Was the secret Walt's imaginary children—some black, some white—the number of which changed every time the subject came up?

"No boys, no *Leaves of Grass*." That Whitman was aesthetically and erotically pleased by young males is no longer disputed. Academic snoops looking for "the real Whitman" beyond the poetry have been thwarted at every turn. The word "homosexual" was coined, illiterately, by a German psychologist and introduced into English the year Whitman died. Whitman's word would have been "pathic." He repeatedly insisted to British enthusiasts for pederasty (John Addington Symonds, Edward Carpenter, the "college" of boy-fanciers at Bolton, others) that he was thoroughly heterosexual and polyphiloprogenitive. That males should be democratically "adhesive" and "amative" was a dimension of his vision of the new civilization he longed for America to have.

Edith Wharton wrote a brilliant story about Whitman's love of boys as the generator of his nursing the wounded in the Civil War, as well as of his poetry: "The Spark" in *Old New York*. A veteran of the war comes across *Leaves of Grass* on a library table. He remembers Whitm from the field hospitals—the ki Quaker nurse who wrote lette home for the incapacitated, w brought bouquets of dandelions a violets, tobacco, candy, pencils, wr ing paper and envelopes. Having f gotten his name, the veteran rec nizes Walt from the frontispiec The narrator of the story tells hi "Yes; that's it. Old Walt—that w what all the fellows used to call hi He was a great chap; I'll never forg him.—I rather wish, though . . . y hadn't told me that he wrote all th rubbish."

The Traubel volumes are full statements Whitman's biographe have a hard time knowing what do with. David S. Reynolds alone, his superb *Walt Whitman's Americ* has really tried to come to grips w the poet's ideas about race and sla ery, which were multitudinous a contradictory. "The nigger, like t Injun, will be eliminated: it is t law of races, history, what-no Whitman told Traubel one evenin As an opinion, this is appalling. T question becomes, how important it? Idle and relaxed conversation not a diplomatic telegram. T "scholars" who read authors' priva mail—who hold up "the re Larkin," for instance, as disgrac and exposed—disgrace only the selves. Walt's standing as a prop of democracy cannot be diminish by an old man's obiter dicta evenings by the stove.

Knowing Whitman is knowi his poetry, and it's a ra reader who knows *Leaves Grass*, a ninety-five-page book th came out in 1855, on the Fourth July—price, two dollars—and th grew over the years, revision after vision, into a 574-page "deathb edition." A "book of fragments," told Traubel. It is, in baldest defi tion, Whitman's Collected Poetr Harold W. Blodgett and Scull Bradley's comprehensive editio (Norton, 1965) adds sixty-five pag of uncollected poems and man script drafts. Every edition in Wh man's lifetime subtracted and add It is a book that was worked on

five cents. I commend it to
n Whitman was editor of *The*
Long Days Here.

gives several poems with the
Socratic (Heraclitean) observa
that we're all made of identical
ns and are therefore materially
same. "Song of One's Self" the
should be: Whitman's recog
illing, boastful confession, beco
a script for readers to recreate
ne each of us self, unique and
ividual. It was this sense of
ng of Myself" that caused So
ster Truth to exclaim after a
ital, "Who wrote that? Never
ld the man's name—it was God
y wrote it!"

Grass nowhere out of place." Em
md quotes a Chinese philosopher
aying Grass goes way back, and
ges in size from lawn grass to
mboo. At some unknown time
lennia ago mankind discovered
t the seeds of certain grasses
ld be ground into flour to make
ad: "civilization" began. Nomadic
ters settled in villages. The old-
breakfast is patronized. Ancient
eks understood eternity by the

utiful Hesse (Demeter, the Ro
man Ceres). The primitive cook
kept a batch of bread-dough going. Peter
had a spirited scrabble over the
fine. Pizza remains *das Ursessen*, the
primordial meal: bread with topping
according to the day's catch.

In naming his book, Whitman
chose the most universal object
imaginable, one synonymous with
both nature and civilization. Grass
comprises Ethan Brand's "dark
and blasted heath" and Wordsworth's
"meadow, grove, and stream, / The earth,
and every common sight, / To me did seem
/ Apparelled in celestial light." But
apart from the double meaning the
poet intended (the leaves of grass
the pages of his book), he was botan
cally correct: grass has leaves, which
we call "blades." There may even be
a hint of etymological precision in
Whitman's choice. Our "blade" (or
grass most likely does not come from
the Germanic for "leaf," since Old
English already has "léaf" as the pri
mary word. "It would almost seem
then," the *OED* tells us, "that the
modern 'blade' of grass is a comic
later to transfer from 'sword-blade.'"
By reclaiming the object-as-weapon
metaphor and returning it to its origi
nal name, Whitman made a title
worthy of his great book. Unlike the

which is "High, the sickle! / Prune
may there indeed be turn'd to reap
ing-tools."

Would poetry have come to pl
Leaves of Grass" or "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" or "When I Lilac Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" or "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" (Whitman's reply to Poe's "The Raven") and no analogue at all for "Song of Myself"? A selected, culled, and expurgated Leaves of Grass makes more sense than a selected Traubel. Perhaps only Proust's latter days were as [illegible] arrived at Whitman's were by the "deathbed edition" of *Leaves*. Typography, paper, [illegible], punctuation (at which Traubel was a whiz and a pedant). Walt kept a big dictionary beside the rocker, consulted it frequently.

There is much to enjoy in Traubel: the elaborate preparations for getting Walt into his wheelchair to go outdoors; the [illegible] the visitors that the housekeeper Mary Davis screened downstairs (no reporters, no preachers), and Whit-

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man's curiosity about the technological revolution in which he lived. [illegible] race, the telephone that a person really hear the fellow on the other end?" He [illegible] half-tone engravings of photographs in magazines and newspapers. He could [illegible] Whitman "liked [illegible]

[illegible] newspapers were Walt's only contacts with the world beyond Mickle Street. And the mail. Should we invite Grover Cleveland *and* Leo Tolstoy to the seventieth birthday party? Tom Eakins? Andrew Carnegie?

This birthday party is like one of the great *salon* pieces in Proust, or the wide-screen deployment of a hundred characters in *War and Peace*. Traubel engineers it all: getting Walt by carriage over to Morgan's Hall, in Quaker gray and black. Policemen lift Walt and carry him upstairs to the hall. The crowd stands as his male nurse wheels him to the center table (a brass band playing "The Battle Hymn of the Republic"). But halfway to his table, a black woman, a cook from the kitchen, appears. Walt (understood to be an invalid wheelchair-bound) stands. The cook mentions her husband's name: Walt had nursed him in one of the unimaginably horrible hospitals of amputees and the dying.

It is a grand evening. There are eight speakers, all of them now forgotten. (Whitman himself declines to speak, referring "any one who may be curious" to *Leaves of Grass*, and [illegible] the evening [illegible] every word from behind a vase of lilacs.) Letters from William Dean Howells and John Addington Symonds are read, and one from Mark Twain congratulating the poet on having lived long enough to witness so many "great births," including "the amazing, infinitely varied and innumerable products of [illegible]

I prefer to imagine Horace [illegible] purely as a host. He must have known that all his devotion and surreptitious shorthand on Mickle Street were repaid by the spectacle of a frail old man painfully getting out of his wheelchair to embrace a soldier's widow. ■

THE SECOND COMING OF RICHARD YATES

Neo-naturalism and the inescapable past

By Lee Siegel

Discussed in this essay:

The Collected Stories of Richard Yates. Henry Holt, 2001. 472 pages. $28.
The Easter Parade, by Richard Yates. Picador USA, 2001. 229 pages. $13.
Revolutionary Road, by Richard Yates. Vintage Books, 2000. 337 pages. $14.

The Culture of Retrieval is inescapable today. There are the ubiquitous memoirists retrieving their early lives, and the songs barely a decade old being remixed, and the children of famous writers and directors and entertainers taking up their parents' occupations (and drawing on their parents' professional connections). We have had *Jane Eyre* the musical, recently on Broadway, a stage revival of *The Producers*, also on Broadway, and a revival of *Hair* (can you imagine?) off-Broadway. There's *The Golden Bowl* on film, a rewrite (if it successfully makes its way through litigation) of *Gone with the Wind*, and at least three small publishers bravely dedicated to reprinting forgotten works by forgotten authors. Americans disrespect the past? Yes and no. We adore the past so intensely that we refuse to let it die, but in fact our indiscriminate homage to it can be a form of disrespect. We are caught in a cycle more inane than vicious. Weakly stimulated by the present, we compulsively return to the past, which has the effect of eclipsing the present, which makes us return to the past.

The inescapability of the past was a thematic obsession of the novelist and short-story writer Richard Yates, and so the publication of his collected short stories—along with the republication of *Revolutionary Road* and *The Easter Parade*—fits nicely into all this relentless retrospection. It was Yates, in fact, who introduced into Ameri[illegible] fiction the theme of inertia as c[illegible] lyst. Portraying characters arreste[illegible] their personal histories, mired in m[illegible] ory and thus destined for the mos[illegible] rationally self-defeating action, [illegible] shifted fiction from the Heming[illegible] track back to the Frank Norris tr[illegible] from realism back to naturalism. T[illegible] is to say, he brought American fict[illegible] from the drama of free will back to [illegible] crisis of determining circumstanc[illegible] In Yates's fiction, childhood and ac[illegible] memories of what parents wrought [illegible] ert the same power over the charact[illegible] destinies that economic forces did [illegible] Norris's *McTeague* or Theodore Dre[illegible] er's *Sister Carrie*.

Strangely, you won't ever hear Ya[illegible] mentioned in connection with t[illegible] American naturalists. He has most [illegible] ten been compared with Hemingw[illegible] the great American realist. And he [illegible] an acknowledged influence on the st[illegible] and sensibility of an entire line of wi[illegible] ers—from Raymond Carver throu[illegible] Ann Beattie, Andre Dubus, Tob[illegible] Wolff, Richard Russo, Richard Fo[illegible] and Jayne Anne Phillips—who co[illegible] sider themselves to have been father[illegible] by Hemingway and, as it were, broug[illegible] up by Yates. These writers have lo[illegible] and eloquently regretted the latte[illegible] lapsed reputation and the unava[illegible] ability (until now) of his work, poin[illegible] ing to his plain, unobtrusive prose a[illegible] to his bleak take on life (traits th[illegible] can be traced, in their view, to Her[illegible] ingway's lapidary sentences and to h[illegible] Lost Generation pessimism). The pr[illegible] sent decision—on the part of thr[illegible]

[illegible] contributing editor of Har[illegible] Magazine. He last reviewed "Serve the [illegible] in the March issue.

rate publishers—to bring Yates
into print can probably be traced
e noble efforts of these writers on
behalf. In 1999, in *Boston Review*,
Yates champion Stewart O'Nan
icted that:

entually the books will make it back
print, just as Faulkner's and Fitzger-
d's did, and Yates will take his place in
e American canon. How this
ll come about it's impossible to
y. Writers and editors are keen-
aware of his situation, so per-
ps his Malcolm Cowley is just
ving up through the ranks at
orton or Doubleday.

appily, Yates's books are in-
passing back into print. In-
ably, the response will be less
onsideration than an unent-
celebration, since everybody
s a comeback, and since it is
to resist an opportunity to
em a writer whose work was
neglected during his life-
e. But if Yates was a writer of
rmous talent, he had no less
mous limitations. By sentim-
tally ignoring those limita-
s, we miss the chance to see
h of them occur as the nec-
ry outgrowth of his gifts and
th occur when his gifts falter.

First, there is Yates's style. His prose is so easy and natural and transparent that it suggests profound humility before life's intractable sadness. Almost ego-less, it calls Kafka's remark that writing is a form of prayer. And Yates's language flows upon his men and women, tortured and silenced by life as they are, that might be called a clemency of accurate observation. At times he writes more like an artist than like a witness. His quiet, humble chronicling of his characters' slow doom (and his characters are almost uniformly doomed) can read like redemptive freedom in an artifact of art, as in the following passage from *The Easter Parade*, a novel that follows the long, unhappy lives of two sisters, Emily and Sarah Grimes:

took only a couple of days for Howard
move his belongings out of the apart-
ent. He was very apologetic about
erything. Only once, when he flicked
e heavy silken tops of his neckties
t of the closet, was there any kind of
scene, and that turned into such a fearful, squalid scene—it ended with her falling on her knees to embrace his legs and begging him, begging him to stay—that Emily did the best she could to put it out of her mind.

The casually cruel flicking of the heavy silken ties is wonderful. Howard is leaving Emily for a younger woman, which rules his character against the reader's mind until the shape of each individual approaches the outermost limit of a new idea. The reason we remember Hemingway's characters (though we've never seen them before, the reason we are moved so powerfully by Yates's characters, who then pass from our minds so quickly, is that we know them



one who better satisfies his vanity. The repetition of "begging him," representing an abandonment of stylistic neutrality, is the only slightly false aesthetic note in the passage. Here, Yates's art—the art of the unaverted eye—briefly stumbles on his compassion. This is one of those fascinating moments when literary style becomes a moral, even a philosophical dilemma, no less than the question of whether a photojournalist should intervene on behalf of an innocent subject.

Such a style can be emotionally consoling in the way that it calmly reflects back to us an image of familiar pain, relieving our suffering with the sense that we do not suffer alone, but it is not always spiritually satisfying. Yates's style is very closely tied to the feelings it evokes. Hemingway's, by contrast, evokes an emotion of which he simultaneously makes intellectual sense. His style is no less unobtrusive to the eye, but it is a poeticized plainness, so well. Of course, Hemingway was a stoic, and stoicism is an idea that rules the emotions. Yates was a pessimist, and pessimism is a feeling that tends off thought.

In "The B.A.R. Man," now reprinted in *The Collected Stories*, Yates me[illegible] with exquisite pacing and nuance the slow deterioration of an embittered and frustrated ex-soldier, John Fallon. But Fallon's eventual detonation flows from his predictable personality, and it conforms to the terrible fact that this near-stereotype [illegible] Fallon's fate, typically, pronounced a certainty from the very first sentence: "Until he got his name on the police blotter, and in the papers, nobody had ever thought much of John Fallon."

The Collected Stories contains seven heretofore unpublished pieces, along with two that appeared in *Playboy* in the seventies, but the

Yates's two story collections, *Eleven* [illegible] throws Yates's virtues and his defi- [illegible] His truly magical storytelling whisks the attention [illegible] sentence, and not a word is wasted. Yet the stories often de- [illegible] unfettered momentum [illegible] moments that verges on stereotype. (Ralph and Gracie in "The [illegible] at times seem to be walking and talking on the set of *The Honeymooners*: "Whaddya—crazy?")

Yates's admirable sympathy for the [illegible] "ordinary people" [illegible] often dampened by a narrow emphasis on their ordinariness. The defensively arrogant young writer who narrates "Builders," from *Eleven Kinds of Loneliness*, might take himself to task for regarding Bernie—the cabdriver who has entangled him in his literary fantasies—as a vulgar, obnoxious, intellectually limited "Philistine," imprisoned "in the pathetic delusions of a taxicab driver." But at the end of the story, Bernie is still a pathetic Philistine while the narrator has become a minor hero simply by virtue of his realization that he has been a minor shit. There is something mildly vindictive about Yates's vindications of ordinary people, a streak of schadenfreude running through his horror at their ordeal. Even Yates's famous unflinching depiction of life's cruelty has its flawed [illegible] like an artist's truthfulness than like a psychiatrist's candor. Each tale in *Eleven Kinds of Loneliness* is like a deeply affecting icon expressing a variation on a brute existential fact of life. Yet it is as if the loneliness had been gouged raw and bleeding from the body of life, [illegible] Yates's systematic pessimism. We are left with the powerful reiteration of an experi- [illegible] We are left, like analysands, alone with the harsh illumination of isolated facts.

Call Yates's outlook, and that of [illegible] rather than the mine, or the factory, or the stockyards, that pulled destiny's strings. Pascal said that people could avoid all the trouble in their lives if they simply stayed in their own rooms. In Yates's world, people can't leave their childhood [illegible] no matter how widely they travel the world as adults. This is not their trouble; rather, their trouble is [illegible] which it is their fictional duty to live out.

The short story "A Glutton for Punishment" is representative in this regard. It tells the tale of a man who as a boy so loved to feign death when playing cops and robbers with other children that he courts and welcomes failure all his life. The internal process driving Yates's characters is frequently so simple that it recalls that old desk gadget with the row of metal balls hanging on strings; by lifting the ball on one end and sending it swinging into the other, the ball at the far end is propelled into the air without moving the ones in between. Indeed, Yates's fictional circumstances are just like those motionless, intermediary balls. They have no weight, no meaning in themselves, except to serve as the kinetic conduit between cause and effect, between past and present, or future, events. Between the first sentence and the last.

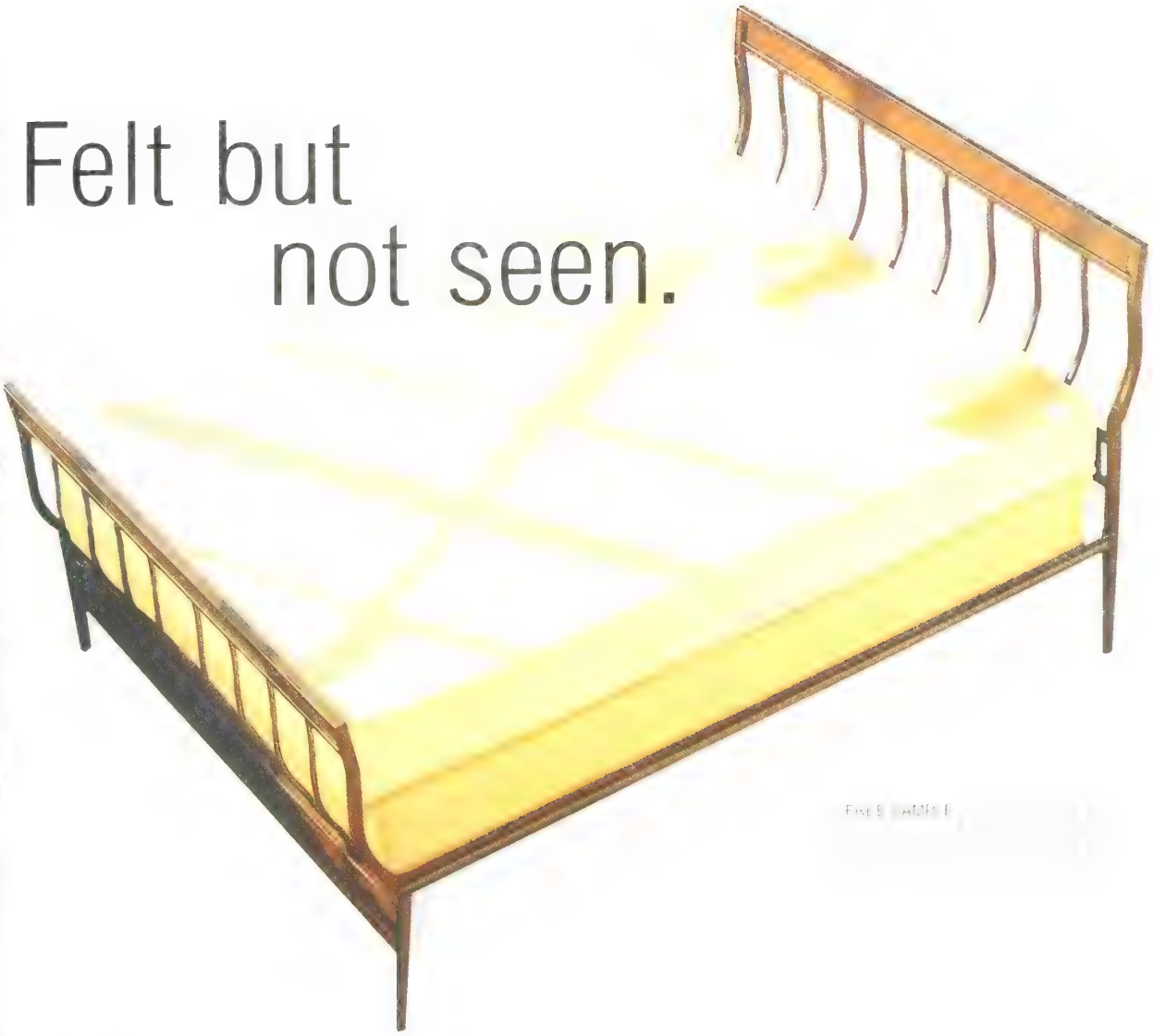
The Easter Parade carries this forced march to an extreme. The novel's first sentence is, "Neither of the Grimes sisters would have a happy life, and looking back it always seemed that the trouble began with their parents' divorce." One reads the novel waiting for this [illegible] to be naive—to be surprised by some kind of irony or extenuation, but what one encounters instead is a straightforward fictional syllogism that inexorably bears out its premise. Two girls are born to a transient alcoholic mother who is unable to maintain a relationship after the end of her marriage. Sarah Grimes marries an abusive husband and dies an alcoholic; Emily Grimes moves from apartment to apartment, and from job to job, unable to maintain an emotional relationship. *The Easter Parade* boasts what must be the only first sentence in the history of the novel that is also a sentencing.

Such a stranglehold of the personal past is a romanticism in retreat, and Yates stands out among postwar American writers for the breadth of his disappointed romanticism and the [illegible] tance of his retreat. Bellow, Elli[illegible] Updike, Salinger, Cheever, Malar[illegible] Mailer, Roth, et al., all searched ev[illegible] day life for a different form of h[illegible] ism, for a quotidian stoicism, for g[illegible] under new kinds of pressure. Yates [illegible] up on everyday life.

When did disappointment [illegible] come a dominant them[illegible] literature? We cannot [illegible] that Dante is disappointed with [illegible] life as he wanders through that [illegible] wood. It would be absurd to call [illegible] Quixote disappointed by his fu[illegible] search for Dulcinea, or Faust di[illegible] pointed in his quest for absolute h[illegible] piness and power. Defining events [illegible] pen in those fictional worlds, [illegible] disappointment becomes a describ[illegible] issue in a world where nothing de[illegible] ing happens. Disappointment attr[illegible] ed literature's attention when the m[illegible] ern world became ordered beyond [illegible] individual's comprehension, and w[illegible] inner life—middle-class, bourg[illegible] life—began to compensate for the [illegible] of outer efficacy. As a response w[illegible] out recourse, an aborted action [illegible] verted into a mood, disappointm[illegible] has no outlet, only a terminus. Th[illegible] why the first and greatest novel of [illegible] appointment, *Madame Bovary*, [illegible] with the heroine's suicide.

Since disappointment is a pu[illegible] mental state, it is one of the more [illegible] expected developments in litera[illegible] that disappointment should also [illegible] one of the great themes of realist[illegible] tion. Unmoored as it is from the [illegible] ternal world, the mood of disappo[illegible] ment required a new technic[illegible] Flaubert invented one. First, he [illegible] *Madame Bovary* in the suburbs (I[illegible] then, they called them "the p[illegible] inces"), thus providing a reality m[illegible] easily correlated to a static inte[illegible] mood than the city could be. T[illegible] in *Madame Bovary*'s celebrated A[illegible] cultural Fair scene, he introduced [illegible] essentially theatrical device of the i[illegible] ic contrast into the novel. By ju[illegible] posing the high-flown romantic se[illegible] ments that Rodolphe, the adulte[illegible] Emma's lover, declares to her, aga[illegible] a local provincial official's pomp[illegible] speech, and putting alongside this [illegible] smell of cow manure, Flaubert in[illegible] porated outer reality into the mod[illegible]

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disappointment. He invented a dynamic environment in which to portray the arrest of personal motion.

[illegible] once called [illegible] the two great suburban novels (the other was *The Great Gatsby*), and *Revolutionary Road* is a distinct echo of it. Published in 1961, at the height of the [illegible] boom, the novel, *Revolutionary Road*, helped put to rest a flood of fictions chronicling life in the suburbs that were quickly expanding around [illegible]. Like Flaubert's work, [illegible] novels and short stories identified the suburbs with the extinction of human vitality. I can't think of any novel, though, that presents life in the suburbs with as black a monotone as *Revolutionary Road*, the story of Frank and April, a young couple whose dreams founder on their illusions. Of course, novelists instinctively disdain the suburbs for the simple reason that the novel was born in the modern city and the suburbs offer a far more limited field of operations. If it's true, as Irving Howe once wrote, that the troubles of life are the conventions of literature, then the convenience of the suburbs puts a definite [illegible] on the subject matter.

Then, too, in postwar America, the suburbs held out the very same *promesse de bonheur* that romantic novels once dangled before Emma Bovary. If art's job is to puncture deceit with illusion, [illegible] on the suburbs seem to [illegible] rather than as a functional means to incalculable ends will [illegible] from Cozzens to [illegible]. Later writers like Updike and Cheever used the suburbs the way Hemingway used the battlefield: not simply as a place but as a place of unfolding. Even Roth's *Goodbye, Columbus*, corrosive satire that it is, allows its characters to do what they [illegible] with their environment. Yates portrays the suburbs as an enveloping condition:

> [illegible] and pastel houses whose bright, uncur- [illegible] from [illegible] and [illegible] the [illegible] of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

mption. Yet is it the redemption of
gious grace or the promise of "ident"
homoanalytic "understanding" that
ars no love or sympathy." Are those
r jingling keys to heaven's gate (as
ther's name suggests), or are they the
ns of selfishness and greed? It hard-
eems to matter. The expectation
race in a world without God and
e psychiatric understanding in a
ld without grace are like two sides
n obscene joke. That is Yates's
o-degree ethos.

uch unsparing sobriety makes up
solidity of Yates's achievement.
s know how to rivet the reader's at-
tion on the quiet desperation of
cknowledged lives. His unpardon-
e failure (and perhaps his secret sat-
action) was never to give his in-
isibly ordinary men and women
freedom to respond. ■

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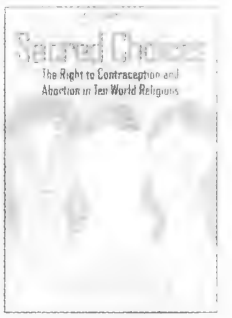
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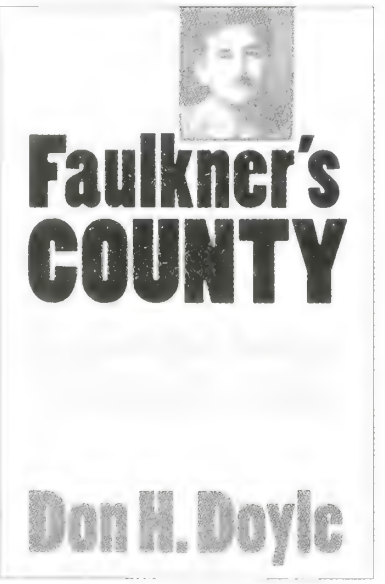
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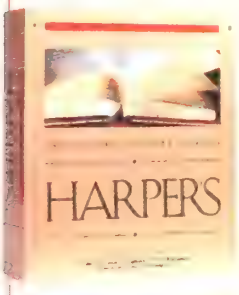
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LETTERS

Continued from page 5

children very high. High standard this context, though, do not mean tional, stringent expectations. Too ten they simply mean whatever is n difficult for the parent.

Take typical New York City p tices. Despite some of the most reaching and effective reforms in nation, New York foster-care agen still routinely obstruct parents at e turn. One small example showe in the most recent state audit of city's case records: the state mand that agencies hold two conferenc year to inform parents of the agen expectations and to develop or up with parents a plan for the family ture. The state audit found that 70 cent of these conferences took p without a parent present—becau most cases parents were not notifi the meeting. The city's own rec show that following 56 percent of conferences, parents were not infor of the plan developed in their abs

Child-welfare experts have t to proclaiming, as Dodson and he leagues do, that children languis foster care because states try too to rehabilitate parents. But clearhe scrutiny shows that this is not so. S do waste terrible amounts of time in working with parents but witl inexorable steps bureaucracies ta protect themselves. Given that s themselves are often the sole cau delay, swifter terminations of par rights and adoptions make no sen all. In many cases they only ad calculably to the suffering of chi trapped in foster care. I don't see the policy's advocates can accept

Corrections

In the May Readings section caption to David Alan Harvey's tograph "Untitled (Cuba, Trin 1998, A workhorse is kept on fa porch)" misidentified the publish his most recent book. It is Nat Geographic Books, not Simo Schuster.

Last month's correction of an Index line incorrectly stated Pep pre-tax profit for 1999. It was $2 lion, not $2.8 million.

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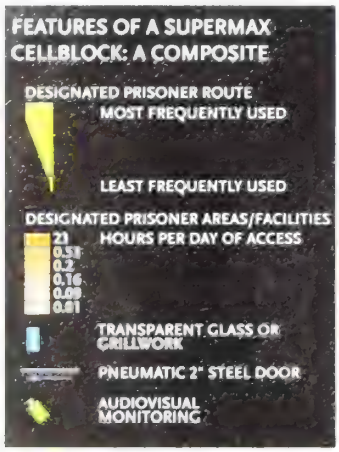
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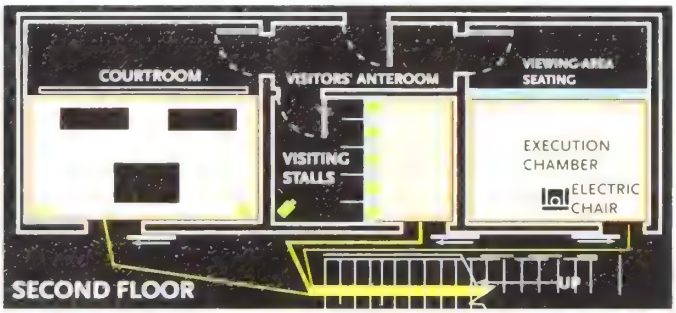
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CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT

An estimated 20,000 Americans, many of them mentally ill, are currently held in at least fifty-seven "supermax" facili throughout the nation. Assignment to a supermax unit (sometimes called a Secured Housing Unit, or SHU) depends [illegible] There is no federal oversight of this process, and the Department of Justice, which issued its first in-depth survey of su maxes in 1999, maintains no records of how many prisoners are sent where. A supermax prisoner spends twenty-th hours a day in solitary confinement; he must be shackled to leave his cell and strip-searched to return, accompanied at all times b least two armed guards. Because prolonged supermax confinement can, in the words of one federal judge, "press the outer bounds of w most humans can psychologically tolerate," even the once sane prisoner may resort to such measures as swallowing shards of glass in effort to produce an injury that might afford him some human contact in the prison's internal clinic. Some states have begun to tran even nonviolent prisoners into supermaxes solely to relieve overcrowding in state prisons. Legal action has occasionally reversed trend, but challenges to the more general horrors of the supermax system have met with less success: although a 1997 Department of tice report conceded that "the overall constitutionality of these programs remains unclear," courts have consistently upheld them as fair. Faced with an upsurge in prisoners suffering from vere psychological distress, Illinois's Tamms Closed Maximum Security Facility last year ope its own mental-health wing.





MOVEMENT

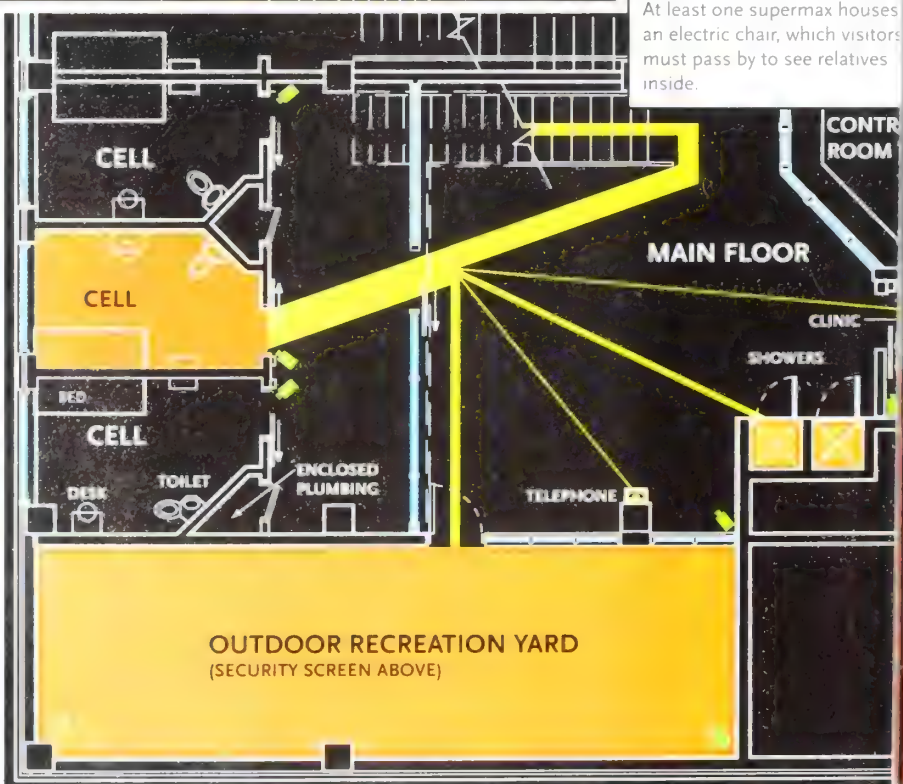
While outside the cell, inmates may be required not to stray from a line painted on the floo and leading directly to a designated area (shower, yard, etc.). Dangerous prisoners ma have a fifty-volt belt strapped around their waist. Many free-standing supermaxes contain their own courtrooms, further limiting the chance that an inmate will ever leave the facil At least one supermax houses an electric chair, which visitors must pass by to see relatives inside.

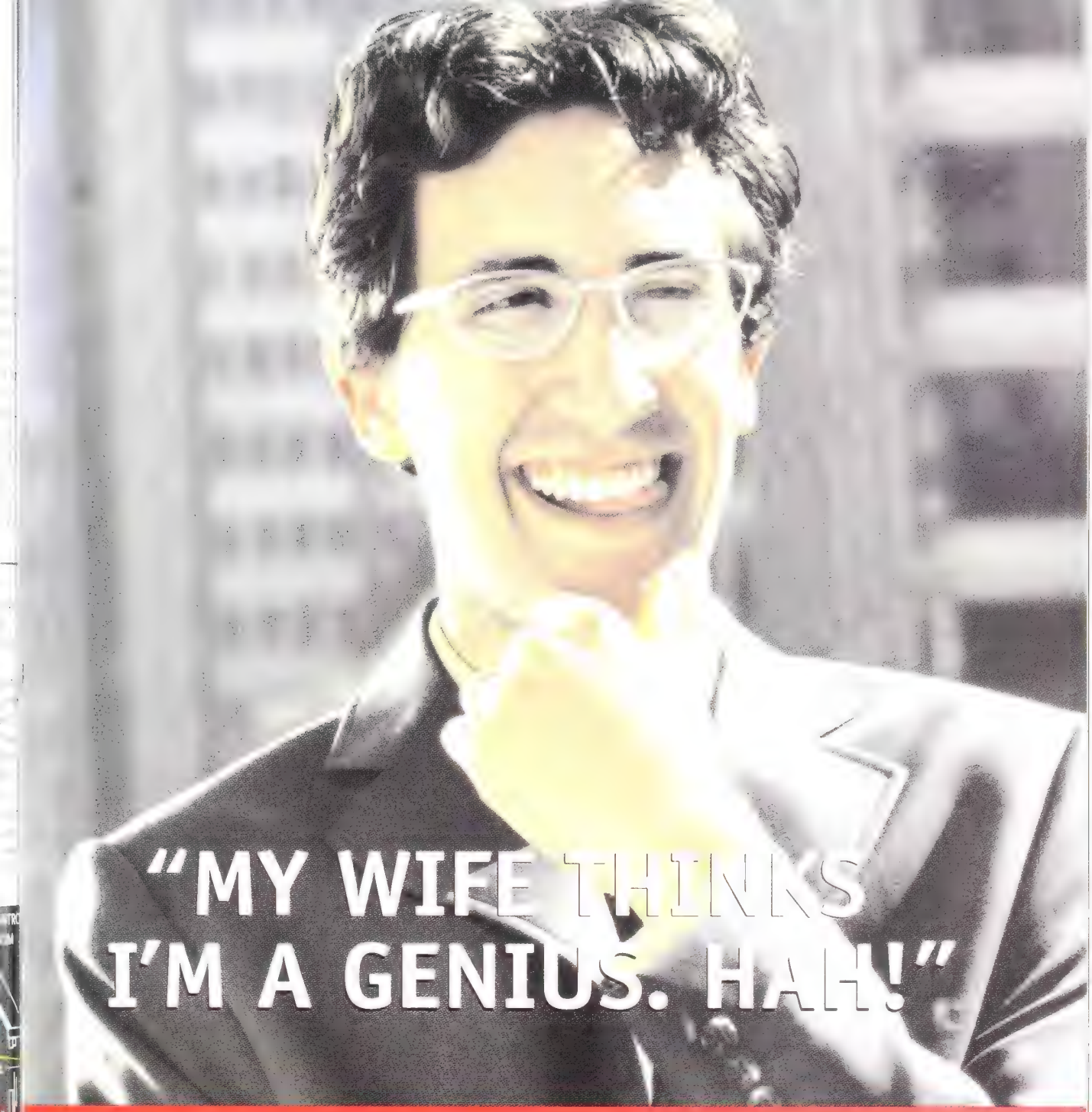
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[illegible] feet and have doors of two-inch-thick reinforced steel perforated with dime-size holes. Should an inmate become disturbed enough to throw his own urine and feces through these holes, the guards will fit a plastic shield over the door, effectively sealing the cell. Beds are steel or concrete slabs raised approximately twelve inches off the floor; bed frames are not used, because an inmate might be able to crawl underneath with [illegible]

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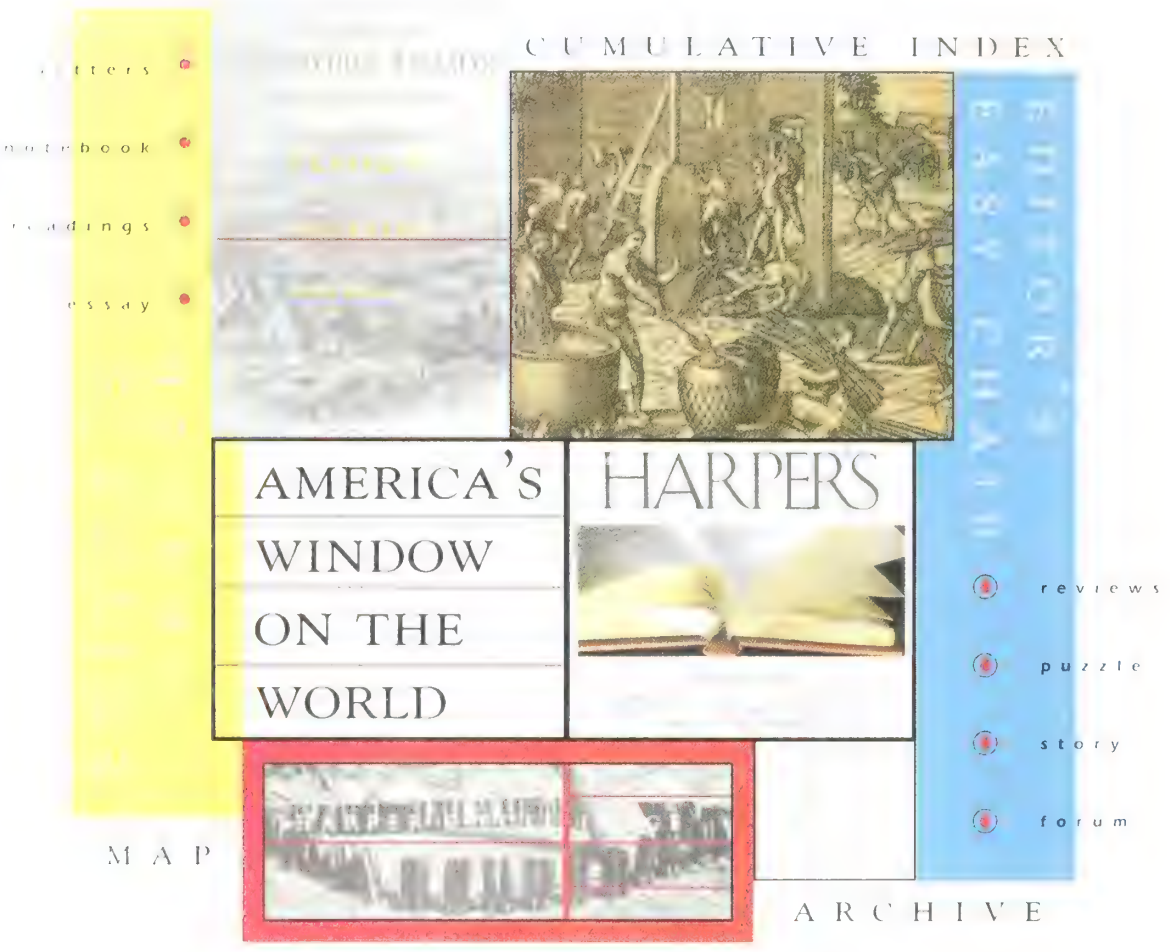
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HARPER'S

LETTERS

Supreme Mistake

In their discussion of the Supreme Court decision *Bush* v. *Gore* ["The Triumph of Expedience," Forum, May], law professor Pamela Karlan and Judge Richard Posner debated whether the finding was similar to that in *Korematsu*, the Japanese-American internment case. Posner defended the validity of the 1944 *Korematsu* decision and in so doing demonstrated his ignorance of the case and the government actions surrounding it. Excluding all Japanese Americans from the West Coast and confining them to camps in March 1942 was illegal and racist.

Posner defended *Korematsu* on the basis of security concerns at the time. There may have been a fear in the general population that Imperial Japanese naval action might occur on our Pacific coast, but this anxiety unquestionably was raised and fueled by the anti-Japanese press and exploited by economic and political interests. The U.S. Army general charged with the defense of the West Coast and congressmen representing the region were briefed in February 1942, by General Mark Clark and Admiral Harold Stark, the chief of Naval Operations, that there was no chance Japan could mount an operation against our West Coast. There was, in fact, "some minor shelling of the Oregon coast by a Japanese submarine," as Posner mentions. But this took place in J 1942, *after* innocent people had b confined in War Relocation Aut ity "camps," and thus was not a ju fication for internment.

Judge Posner was also only tially correct when he said t some "Japanese Americans had fused to swear unqualified a giance to the United States." oath of allegiance was requested the War Relocation Authority q after Japanese Americans were ready in the "camps" (as part o poorly conceived program to rec volunteers). Furthermore, Pos does not mention the signific fact that during World War II other groups of Americans w forced to answer similar loya questions, even those Americ from such enemy countries as G many and Italy.

Lastly, the Supreme Court de sion in *Korematsu* is the most b tant instance of U.S. governme officials suppressing evidence a presenting false information for j tices to act upon. This was revea in three coram nobis, or writ of ror, cases in the 1980s (for whic served as a documentary researche *Korematsu*, *Yasui*, and *Hirabayas* These resulted in the vacation, three separate courts, of all thr wartime convictions.

Based on findings of the Comm sion on Wartime Relocation and I ternment of Civilians (for whic served as an adviser), Congress e tended a national apology a awarded token financial restituti to survivors of the camps. These a tions, along with the favorable r ings in the coram nobis cases, are t ultimate refutation of Judge Posne

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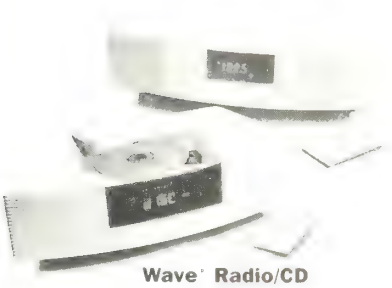


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ity to overpower its foes. Whether
d-running soccer mom. Her marital
r and the centaur revealed the lim-
nonpareil in the art of consuming
As much as I resent being hostage to
production whims of the Arab oil
tel, I am now forced to cast all those
gant emirs and sultans in the role
Theseus. Based on the current low
ancing charges I have seen for
Vs, I delight in thinking they have
h high gas prices.

nkato, Minn.

Before reading Paul Roberts's article,
iewed the drivers of SUVs with a
t of contempt. At a time of highest
vironmental awareness, how could
yone indulge in such gross con-
hile riding in a friend's Explorer, I
s grateful for the tinted windows
t someone spot me, and I exited the
hicle abashed.

But reading about the auto compa-
es' manipulation of the consumer as
ey prey upon insecurity and fear
ividualism has softened my heart. I
I dread driving near these lane-over-
wing behemoths; I still feel disgust
the sight of one SUV taking up two
gular-size parking spaces in our
rinking city. But now, more than

n Francisco

olution of the Specious

Robin Fox ["Human Nature and
uman Rights," Readings, April] at-
npts to expose popular misconcep-
ons about "human rights" and "hu-
these words that it is difficult to
l where he stands.

sion of part of human behavior from

of the "gene pool" (

All human behavi

n procreation. I

Naples, Fla.

To Boldly Row

tive Joust," Letters, July] i
g to David Foster

Tense," April] shows

Toronto

Correction

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HARPER'S MAGAZINE

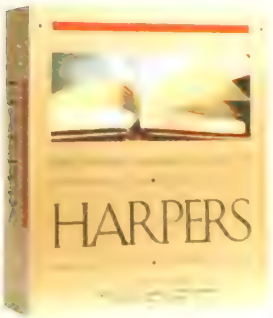
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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of the U.N.'s 21 human-rights agreements that have been ratified by the United States : 4
Number of the U.N.'s 31 global environmental agreements that have been : 10
Federal funds budgeted this year for cleanup of the Defense Department's hazardous waste : $7,460,000,000
Minimum number of hours of blackouts predicted for California this summer : 260
Estimated year in which El Paso, Texas, will exhaust its current sources of water : 2030
Year in which Iceland plans to have ceased all use of fossil fuels : 2030
Number of 21 cruise ships tested by Alaska last summer whose wastewater met federal sewage-treatment standards : 1
Number of U.S. marine sanctuaries where fishing is illegal : 0
Percentage of U.S. coastal waters where this is true : 0.005
Percentage of U.S. land where hunting is illegal : 3.5
stimated number of court decisions citing federal negligence in endangered-species protection that remain unheeded : 270
Percentage of these decisions that President Bush has proposed to allow the government to ignore indefinitely : 100
Number of new worker-protection rules whose enactment Bush ordered postponed on his first day in office : 9
Ratio of the starting salary of an Oklahoma prison guard to the federal poverty level for a family of four : 10:11
Chances that a Mississippi African American opposes removing the state flag's Confederate emblem : 3 in 10
Duration in decades of an Alabama study that allowed hundreds of syphilitic African Americans to go untreated : 4
Number of decades between the end of the study and the Alabama legislature's expression of "regret" over it in May : 3
ercentage of Americans who believe that Timothy McVeigh was acting as part of an as-yet-unidentified "larger group" : 40
Age at which Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon enlisted in an underground Jewish paramilitary group in Palestine : 14
Months after his election in February that Sharon criticized Palestinians for "sending children to the front" : 2
Percentage of Palestinians working in Israel last summer who lost their jobs after Israel's blockade began in October : 70
Percentage of the working residents of Del Rio, Texas, who are directly employed in the war on drugs : 20
Estimated percentage of Colombia's cocaine exports controlled by right-wing paramilitary leaders : 40
Number of right-wing Colombian groups on the United States' designated foreign terrorist list : 0
Number of left-wing Colombian groups on the list : 2
Chance that a member of the European Parliament voted in January to support E.U. participation in Plan Colombia : 1 in 508
Number of domestic U.S. military target-practice sites that are closer to populated areas than the one on Vieques : 6
Ratio of the cancer rate on Puerto Rico's main island to that on Vieques : 5:6
Chance that a baby born in Belarus will contract thyroid cancer in his or her lifetime : 1 in 4
Chances that a teenage boy in Botswana will die of AIDS, given current infection rates : 9 in 10
Percentage change since 1998 in the amount Americans spend each year on prescription drugs : +40
Estimated number of Americans who died last year from adverse reactions to such drugs : 218,000
Rank of being "free of pain" among seriously ill Americans' top priorities regarding care at the end of their life : 1
Rank of being "at peace with God" : 2
Amount the inventor of the yellow "smiley face" had received for it by the time of his death in April : $45
Estimated amount Tiger Woods's caddie made last year : $1,000,000
Price of "Invisible Jim," an empty doll-shaped package, from a U.S. toy manufacturer : $3
Price of a pair of stonewashed, sanded, hand-torn jeans from an Italian designer : $2,222
Price paid at auction in May for a sculpture of Pope John Paul II being struck by a meteorite : $800,000

Figures calculated by an adult [illegible]
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AN AMERICAN ALBUM

HARPER'S MAGAZINE

1850 - 2000

"Anyone casting about for a seasonal gift would do well to remember what is by far the richest anthology published this year (with) a roster of contributors of almost surreal distinction."

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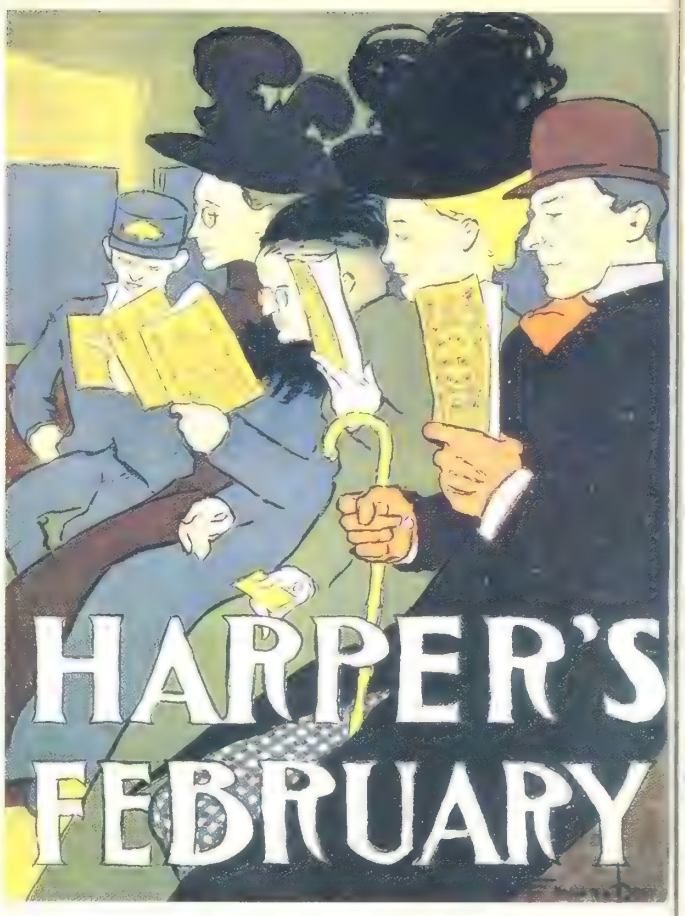
This year marks the sesquicentennial of *Harper's Magazine*–the nation's oldest monthly magazine–and in honor of the occasion, the editors have published a magnificent 712-page, richly illustrated volume of the best writing from the magazine's pages. For 15 decades of uninterrupted publication, *Harper's* has explored the American experience with a fiercely independent spirit and spectacular writing. Now that experience is available in *An American Album: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Harper's Magazine.*

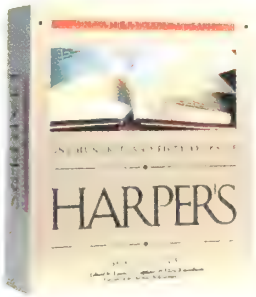
The Table of Contents is stunning in its range: Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, Eudora Welty, John Cheever, Philip Roth, John Updike, Norman Mailer, David Mamet, Annie Dillard, and Tom Wolfe–and scores of other writers and artists who have made an indelible impression on America's literary history.

The volume contains more than 200 images including photographs, line art, and works originally published in the magazine by Frederic Remington, Winslow Homer, Edwin Abbey, Charles Dana Gibson, Edward Gorey, Maxfield Parrish, Leroy Neiman, Howard Pyle, Arthur Rackham, Edward Searle, Saul Steinberg, James Thurber, and Andy Warhol.

An American Album features a foreword by historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., as well as a 15-page introduction and history of the magazine by editor Lewis H. Lapham. Lavishly illustrated, the grand volume is beautifully printed on acid-free paper with smythe-sewn binding for lasting brilliance.

An American Album is a window on life in this coun-





Edward Penfield's "February" poste created to promote the February 1895 iss of Harper's Magazine. *Penfield (1866-192 was one of America's most highly influent illustrators and poster artists, widely crea ed with bringing abstraction to commerc art through boldly simplified shapes. A eight-page full color portfolio of his pron tional posters for* Harper's *is featured in A American Album.*

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READINGS

[Essay]

IT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER

From "Sane Cows, or BSE Isn't the Worst of It," by Edward Luttwak, in the February 8 London Review of Books. *Luttwak's most recent book is* Turbo Capitalism: Winners and Losers in the Global Economy. *His essay "Give War a Chance" appeared in the November 1999 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

At the Wye Plantation on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the department of agriculture of the University of Maryland raises beautiful Black Angus cattle with all the latest equipment and best techniques. It produces bullocks and breeding heifers but serves as a model for Maryland's "cow-calf operations" that produce beef for the table rather than milk. The results are impressive: 90 percent of the Wye cows produce a calf each year, and steers are ready for sale by their eighteenth month. I went there to find out how my family's primitive Bolivian ranch might be improved—only 60 percent of our cows give birth in any one year, and our steers grow so slowly that we must keep them for thirty months to achieve worthwhile weights for the market. Cattle are capital, and were indeed its very first embodiment, yielding their offspring as interest. The higher the birthrate, the higher the rate of return, if costs are equal. And time is money with cattle as with any other form of capital: a steer sold at thirty months earns less net revenue than one sold after eighteen months at equal weights, prices, and costs. All in all, the Maryland numbers showed that there was much to be improved on our ranch.

The Maryland experts were interested in how we ranch and how we sell our cattle, given the 200 roadless kilometers to the nearest town (by rafting downriver to Brazil). They were eager to help. Our humped Nelor cattle conceive by the fifteenth month or even earlier, give birth after nine months of gestation, and can become pregnant again a few weeks later, just like the Wye cows. But our fertility rate is so much lower, I learned, because if cows and bulls are left to commune according to their desires, many cows resist impregnation, preferring to raise their calves for at least six months before becoming pregnant again. Artificial insemination is the remedy. In Wye all cows ready to breed again but not visibly pregnant are tested with sonograms by the resident vets, and those carrying no embryo are separated from the herd to be frequently tested, with a thermometer inserted into their vagina, until estrus is detected. At that point, the frozen semen of prize bulls is defrosted and injected, and the procedure is repeated until sonogram results are positive.

With our cattle dispersed over 78 square miles of savanna grassland interrupted by islands of tropical forest, we cannot emulate any of those practices. With one-by-one manual husbandry impossible, our cows and bulls are left to graze and procreate on their own, except

for the few days a year when our eight cowboys, their older children, the manager, and I round [illegible] we can find to corral them for counting, the branding of yearlings, castration, foot-and-mouth vaccination, the feeding of a vermifuge, and fumigation against external parasites. During the long rainy season, when swollen streams and swamped pastures drastically limit movement even on our sturdy criollo horses, we do not even know where our cattle are much of the time, let alone which of our heifers is ready for impregnation. In any case, we have no sonogram machines or the electricity to operate them; our cows are too wild to be tested for estrus with a thermometer; and we can't preserve semen, for we have no refrigeration. The only way we can increase the fertility of our cows—the key to our entire profitability, as we have no dairy cattle—is to provide enough bulls. In Wye they keep a few "clean-up" bulls with their 170 cows to complement artificial insemination, but we have forty bulls for each lot of 500 cows, deliberately selecting smaller-framed animals because young heifers flee from the very large bulls that win prizes—heavy and slow, they seem to enjoy standing around looking impressive but mount few cows and earn their keep only with extracted semen. Our calves are also born smaller, of course, but that is no disadvantage at birthing time, when our heifers easily drop their young without any help at all, let alone the pulling chains, winches, and risky cesareans used by cattle raisers in all advanced countries.

There was one consolation in my failure to learn anything useful about fertility. Our procreation costs start and end with our bulls, bought at $400 each—and we can eventually recover more than that when we sell them for meat in their eighth year. At Wye, by contrast, as in all commercial cattle-raising ventures in Europe and the United States, high fertility does not come cheap. Sonogram machines, veterinary care, even the semen, at more than $30 a shot, are all very expensive, and there are many more abortions and stillbirths when cattle are bred for size, to jump-start the race to the market. Doing my sums, I discovered that for us a 60 percent live-birth rate was better than Wye's 90 percent in spite of all the extra bulls we have to keep, simply because of the vast difference in the cost of keeping animals in the first place.

At Wye, as in almost every cow-calf operation in Western Europe or the United States, cattle cannot feed themselves all year round on green pasture. Only hobby farmers with few cows and a lot of land have the ten acres or so of decent land per head that are needed—and even they must usually provide baled hay during the coldest winter months when grass stops growing. With all the better land in Europe and North America taken up by the intensive or arable farming that inherent productivity or subsidies make more profitable, almost all commercial cattle raisers must complement whatever green pasture they have with hay and oth-

[Obituaries]

ANIMAL KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

From the January/February issue of Animal People, *a bimonthly newspaper.*

NOAH, a two-day-old Asian gaur cloned from a single gaur cell implanted into a cow's egg, died from common dysentery on January 10 at Trans Ova Genetics of Sioux Center, Iowa. Noah was the first successfully cloned member of an endangered species.

MEDUSA, seventeen, a sloth bear on loan to the Toledo Zoo from the Detroit Zoo, died on December 4 of dehydration and starvation, twenty-one days after the zoo's curator wrongly guessed she was pregnant, and isolated her without food or water in hopes she would hibernate. Sloth bears, however, do not hibernate during pregnancy.

[illegible], the domestic cat chosen from among 10,000 applicants in 1990 to stroll across Jack Duckworth's pigeon loft in updated opening credits of the forty-year-old British serial drama *Coronation Street*, died on November 14 from [illegible].

TAMMIE, forty-one, a gorilla who broke out of the Little Rock Zoo with her mate, Rocky, in 1997, died at the zoo on November 23. How [illegible] got [illegible] their [illegible] was never quite resolved. They were recaptured as they headed to the food preparation area and snacked on apples until found.

KEN ALLEN, twenty-nine, a Borean orangutan noted for achieving nine escapes from the San Diego Zoo during the 1980s, was euthanatized on November 29. Ken Allen was named for zookeeper Ken Willingham and security officer Ben Allen, who rescued him as an infant, when his mother neglected him, then sat on him.



irloin Brothers, *by Frank Stout, was on display last winter at The Painting Center in New York City.*

er feeds at a cost of roughly $250 per year per head—it makes little difference if they buy the hay ready-baled or grow it themselves, with tractors, harvesters, fuel, fertilizer, weed killers, and pesticides. The leftover straw of cereal crops and other roughage that may cost little or nothing is used, too, but lactating and pregnant cows and those fast-growing steers must also be fed more costly, more protein-rich concentrates, such as maize, oats, barley, grain sorghum, wheat, beet pulp, oilseed or soybean meal, molasses, synthetic urea, and, until recently, processed animal offal, including the sheep brains that have led to present difficulties. Our cattle, by contrast, eat only the natural grasses of the savanna, picking and choosing among different plants at different times of the year to find all the nutrition they need, except for salt with mineral additives that costs us $3 per head per year.

We can afford to keep all those extra bulls and the 40 percent of our cows that fail to give birth in any one year because each steer we sell can pay for the salt of eighty-three heads. Since feeding costs us 1 percent of what cattle raisers in Europe or North America must pay, their animal husbandry holds no lessons for us. True, we must keep our steers for thirty months before they are ready for market, but that only costs us $7.50 in salt as opposed to the $375 or more in hay and concentrates eaten by a Maryland or British steer [illegible] ready for sale at eighteen months. [illegible] the interest on delayed revenue to be reckoned, as well as the much lower weight of our steers, but given our abundance of grass it simply does not pay for us to minimize time and maximize weight at high cost, let alone fatten our animals in feedlots with expensive concentrates and supplements.

In other words, while European and North American cattle raisers pay their dues to the corporations that supply them with everything from tractors and fuel to bagged concentrates, we pay our dues to nature by accepting its pace and limits. So far that has been a rewarding choice: our return on cattle capital exceeds 30 percent, more than twice what [illegible] American and European cattle raisers can expect, though their corporate suppliers fare much better of course. The profitability [illegible] sector is so tenuous in the United States that many ranchers stay in business only because they are not in business at all but rather keep their ranches for pleasure and display, à la W. Bush or Ted Turner, losing money each year, which they bill to the taxpayers by way of loss credits against the earnings of their real trade. Recently "buffalo"

(bison) ranching became fashionable among the [illegible] attempted [illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible] tube fencing [illegible] and profits even lower. Among [illegible] ranchers, [illegible] many are consuming their capital year by year by accumulating mortgages against their land. As the number of independent ranchers and [illegible] continues to decline in the States, as it would in Europe but for subsidies, they are replaced by large-scale corporate operations, some of them immense; but they, [illegible]

[illegible] attempt to offset miserable margins with sheer quantity, which in turn drives down prices, reducing profitability even more. During the last two years, we have sold finished steers in the border town of Costa Márquez, in the back of Rondônia, one of Brazil's least developed areas, at prices ranging from $1.05 to $1.45 per kilo, measured at 50 percent of live weight ("pencil shrinkage"), only a few cents less than the price to be had in Chicago for animals on which far more money has been spent. But [illegible] ently profitable, Amazonian forests would not be endangered. (For the record, we preserve our forests intact; our land in San Joaquín [illegible] on the very edge of the uninterrupted rain forest that begins just across a ten-mile lake but is still mostly savanna grassland that was never deforested.)

At the Wye Plantation I learned something else, or rather saw it while we were talking. It was the veterinary chart of a Maryland cow-calf operation, with separate rows for pneumonia, diphtheria, infectious bovine rhinotracheitis, parainfluenza 3, bovine viral diarrhea, bloat, three kinds of clostridial infections, coccidiosis, pinkeye, cancer eye, foot rot, actinomycosis lump jaw, hard lump jaw, acidosis, laminitis, nitrate poisoning (from heavily fertilized pasture), and many more conditions. Treatments were also listed with antihistamines, dexamethasone, adrenaline, sulpha boluses, dimethyl sulfoxide, nitrofurazone, and novalson, as well as several vaccines, vermifuges, fumigants, homely iodine and castor oil, and many, many applications of antibiotics—a long list of them, starting with penicillin and going on to LA-200 and others equally obscure to me.

The reason I found this chart startling—though I later learned that it reflected normal conditions throughout Europe and North America—was that on our ranch we get by with one vaccination, two vermifuge doses, and two fumigations per year, all done by ourselves since there is no vet within reach. How could that be, I asked, that Maryland cows needed all those medicines, and the frequent services of veterinarians? The experts pointed out that a great variety of medicines was indeed essential, for otherwise cattle would die of disease. They estimated that veterinary care and supplies added some $50 per head per year to the average cost of upkeep.

We, too, lose cattle to disease as well as to jaguars, maned wolves, and anacondas (yes, they can swallow a newborn calf), but our combined losses have been running at roughly 1 percent per year. No, I was told, it was nothing like that: without several specifics and lots of antibiotics, cattle raisers would lose a great many head, and in feedlots mass deaths would be inevitable, for infections spread immediately among animals kept within inches of one another. Again, I asked why cows in salubrious Maryland—or Britain, for that matter—were so much more vulnerable to disease than our cows, which live in the intensely tropical Amazon basin, dense with every form of life, including a myriad of microorganisms, internal and external parasites, and blood-sucking vampire bats that carry all manner of diseases.

I received two answers. The first was that our slim Nelors, while much less productive of meat and useless for milking, were resistant to disease

[illegible]

ANYTHING TO DECLARE?

[illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
package of dog stewed in turtle juice
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
14 grapevine cuttings in a passenger's panties
a small armadillo
[illegible]
[illegible]



These intellectual chauvinists [illegible]

because they were the offspring of natural selection undistorted by veterinary interventions, rather than cattle systematically bred for productivity alone. The second answer, however, was the more consequential: unlike humans or pigs, who can eat anything organic, animal or vegetable (except for grass and wood, because our stomachs cannot break down cellulose), bovines are pure herbivores. Their four-part ruminant stomachs break down the cellulose in grass that we can't digest to extract all the proteins, vitamins, minerals, and calories they need. Conversely, cattle can't easily digest proteins, beyond the tiny amounts consumed by the microbes in their first stomach (the rumen), which break down cellulose. Yet for the sake of rapid weight gain and rapid procreation, European and North American cattle are fed with cereals and all those other concentrates that contain extra protein, as well as pre-bloom altalfa hay, which is itself 16 percent protein. One result is that European and North American cattle raisers are always in danger of losing their animals to bloat, a foamy gas buildup in the rumen that presses against the lungs with a suffocating effect. Antifoaming agents are used, and trocars are kept on hand to puncture the rumen in emergencies.

The other results of feeding proteins to herbivores are much less dramatic, altogether more prevalent, and of far greater significance for human health: chronic diarrhea and acidosis, which hardly ever kill cattle outright but disrupt their immune systems, exposing them to all the diseases I saw on the Wye chart and a few more besides.

To put it plainly, nearly all beef cattle in Europe and North America are permanently unhealthy and survive in a chronic state of low-level sickness only with large doses of antibiotics. Because they cause [illegible] water retention that increases weight, antibiotics are just the thing for cattle raisers and feedlot operators—whose animals could not survive a week without them. For those who eat the resulting beef no ill consequence need follow individually, though I [illegible] the order of eating the most [illegible] pumped full of antibiotics and assorted medicines—since [illegible] Wye. I eat only Argentine beef when I can get it, and my own when in Bolivia.

Public health, however, is another matter. At a time when old diseases such as TB are reappearing, and wounds and fractures are once again followed by stubborn, even lethal infections because many bacteria strains have become highly resistant to antibiotics, their [illegible] the problem [illegible] their human [illegible] antibiotics from cooked beef, but research prompted by [illegible] incidentally disproved that reassuring belief. One result is that those who eat beef may be spared an infection now and then; another is that they, too, are contributing to the evolution of increasingly resistant strains [illegible]

The mad, [illegible] European and North American beef production in its present form. Tens of millions of head of cattle are raised in spite of the lack of anything like enough green pasture for them. In Western Europe, subsidies provide an incentive to raise beef cattle even without any pasture at all, or almost none, as in Tuscany, for example, whose [illegible]

Fiorentina steaks—is the largest of all cattle [illegible] among all those vineyards and villas. When I questioned [illegible] by the entire industry of both continents, the Wye experts replied that without them there could be [illegible] tough, wonderful, as any visitor to Argentina can attest, but is too tough for palates used to the very soft flesh of grain-fed animals, further softened by immobility in feedlots—and by antibiotics. But their [illegible] would be necessarily scarce and expensive. It no longer could be an everyday food for virtually everyone, but only for the affluent, and only an occasional treat for the poor or parsimonious. Yet at the same time cardiologists unanimously [illegible] that most people in Europe and North America eat far too much beef—that it should be an occasional treat rather than an everyday food, which many eat twice a day.

The veterinary profession has therefore systematized, indeed normalized the raising of unhealthy cattle to achieve the very abundance that makes people unhealthy. In its rarity, BSE is only an extreme consequence of feeding animal proteins to herbivores that can't eat even alfalfa in any quantity without ill effect, let alone sheep brains. If the unending BSE drama finally attracts [illegible] cattle industry, we may yet see North American and European herds reduced to their naturally fed size, that small fraction of present numbers for which green pasture can be provided all year round. And if that supply is insufficient, the pampas and savannas of South America can provide all that is needed, my ranch included, of course, with its beautiful Nelors.

[illegible]

THE DAY THE MUSIC DIED

[illegible]

(To the tune of "Yesterday," by the Beatles)

Leprosy,
Bits and pieces falling off of me.
[illegible]

Suddenly,
I'm not half the man I used to be.
Can't feel anything peripherally
From swollen nerves, hypersensitivity.

Why don't leprae grow in vitro? We cannot say.
In vivo they grow very slow, once in 12 da . . .
ay . . . ay . . . ays.

Hard to get,
But the stigma hasn't faded yet.
Don't keep an armadillo as a pet.
Clofazamine and Dapsone—don't forget.

CONGENITAL INFECTIONS
(To "I Will Survive," by Gloria Gaynor)

At first I was afraid, because I had a cat.
I had heard of toxoplasma and other things like that.
I spent so many nights thinking, "I can't be a mom."
But I was wrong, and I learned how to get along.

Tossed out the cat
And washed my hands.
My doctor told me all the things I need to understand:
"Watch out for TORCHS, now your EPT turned blue,
Toxo, rubella, CMV, HIV, and syphilis, too."

Stay in good health
And get your shots.
This is the best way to make sure that you have healthy tots.
IgG can cross placentas, IgM cannot get through.
For diagnosis, this is a clue.

So, my child, you will survive.
As long as you know how to care, you will stay alive.
You have all your life to live, with the care you have to give.
You will survive. You will survive. Hey! Hey!

HERPES SIMPLEX 1 AND 2
(To "The Sound of Silence," by Simon and Garfunkel)

Hello, herpes, our old friend,
Will be with us 'til the end.
'Cause the virus softly creeping
Left its genes while we were sleeping.
Not integrated into our genome,
It will roam, that episome.
The DNA of herpes.
Herpes simplex 1 and 2
Will forever be with you.

On our gums, lips, eyes, or down there, too.
And there isn't much that we can do.
But there is acyclovir to help,
And we'll want help
From herpes hurting you.
"Fools," say I, "you must beware!"
Herpes simplex's everywhere.
Symptomatic or in the ganglia,
Caught in New York or in East Anglia
It will be latent
And reoccur when times are bad,
And you'll be had
When herpes comes for you.

[Transcript]

THE EXECUTIONER'S SONG AND DANCE

From the transcript of an execution carried out at the Diagnostic and Classification Center in Jackson, Georgia, and audiotaped by corrections officials. Between 1983 and 1998, all twenty-three electrocutions in Georgia were taped by prison officials. The tapes were obtained by David Isay, a producer of radio documentaries, from Michael Mears, an Atlanta lawyer who is challenging the constitutionality of the electric chair; portions were aired by National Public Radio affiliates in May. At the time of the execution narrated below, Ralph Kemp was the warden of the Diagnostic and Classification Center, and Willis R. Marable was the prison warden. Colonel David Lowe and "Mickey" were corrections officers; William Hill was the senior assistant attorney general.

RALPH KEMP: This is a recording of the execution of Ivon Ray Stanley III C3603. July the twelfth, 1984.

WILLIS R. MARABLE: Colonel Lowe? Mickey?

COLONEL LOWE AND MICKEY: Yes.

MARABLE: The witnesses are now entering the witness room.

LOWE: Okay.

MARABLE: The state witnesses have entered the witness room and have seated themselves in the front row. At this time, the news-media witnesses are entering. All witnesses have arrived and have seated.

MICKEY: Let's proceed.

LOWE: We can proceed if you're ready.

MARABLE: Colonel Lowe, Mickey. The warden has entered the execution chamber at this time, approaching the microphone, and is in the process of briefing all witnesses to remain quiet and to avoid any unnecessary movements. He also advised them that medical assistance is available if needed. The warden is confirming all witnesses. All witnesses have been confirmed. The warden is in the process of advising all witnesses that we will now proceed [illegible], the court-ordered execution of Ivon Stanley. Mickey? Colonel Lowe?

LOWE: Yes.

MARABLE: We're still waiting for the execution team members to bring him into the execution chamber. The execution team is in the process of escorting the condemned into the execution chamber. He is walking, unassisted, walked straight to the chair, and has seated himself in it. One of the execution-team members is now in the process of securing the back strap. The other members are securing the arm straps and leg straps. The back strap is secure at this time. Both arm straps are secure at this time. They are still in the process of securing the leg straps. At this time the condemned has been secured in the chair. He is not moving, he is just sitting there very passively, staring out at the witnesses.

The superintendent has afforded the condemned an opportunity to make a last statement. He has declined to make a last statement. He is afforded the opportunity for prayer. He has declined this also.

The warden is now in the process of reading the court order to the witnesses and to the condemned. The condemned is still sitting there very passively, no movement, staring out at the witnesses.

At this time, the execution team members are entering the execution chamber with the headset and the leg band. One member is in the process of securing the leg band to the fleshy part of the inmate's right leg. Two members of the execution team are in the process of securing the headset to the condemned.

The condemned has offered no resistance throughout. He is just sitting there very passively, not moving. The leg band has been secured to the condemned's right leg, and also the headset has been secured to his head.

Preparation is now [illegible] from the forehead of the condemned. And he is secure and ready for the execution, with the exception of the hood being placed over his head and the wires being attached to the leg band and to the headset.

The electrician now has entered the execution chamber and is securing the wire to the headset.

LOWE: They're moving very well. It's a good time to do it now. Marable, stand still. Mickey, put William Hill on.

WILLIAM HILL: Hello.

LOWE: William, the attorney general is here.

[illegible] Hill, this is Mike. Have you received word that the execution shouldn't be carried out?

[illegible]

Thank you.

HILL: All right.

MARABLE: Colonel Lowe? Mickey? The wires have been attached and secured to the headset and to the leg band. The perspiration has been wiped again from the condemned's forehead. And the hood is being placed on at this time. The face hood is secured. The warden and all the execution-team members have departed the execution chamber. Stand by for the warden's last telephone check.

LOWE: Ralph, this is the commissioner.

KEMP: Yes.

LOWE: There are no stays. You can proceed to carry out the official order of the court.

KEMP: Very well. At my count of three, press your buttons. One. Two. Three.

MARABLE: Colonel Lowe? Mickey? The execution is now in progress. When the first surge entered his body he stiffened and I heard a pop, as if one of the straps broke. But I can't tell from this vantage point. He is still at this time sitting there with clenched fists, with no other movements. He is slowly relaxing at this time. From my vantage point it seems that the inmate has relaxed somewhat. His fists are still clenched, but there is no movement from the condemned. There is still no movement from the individual; he's still just sitting there.

MARABLE: The execution is completed. We're now into the five minutes' lapse time. It appeared that when the execution was completed and the power was off, he relaxed somewhat. It was pretty visible, that he relaxed even more than it seemed before.

LOWE: Any reaction from the witnesses?

MARABLE: They're sitting very still, just observing[illegible] writing notes, taking notes. But other than that they are just sitting, staring into the execution chamber.

MARABLE: We have now completed two minutes of the five minutes' lapse time. There's still no—very little—no movement from the witnesses. No one's even taking notes at this time. [illegible] the execution chamber. We have now completed four minutes. One minute remaining.

MARABLE: Colonel Lowe? Mickey? We have now completed five minutes' lapse time. Stand by. The doctors are now preparing to enter the execution chamber to check for life signs.

One of the physicians is now in the process of doing this. The first physician has completed his examination; the second is now making his check. The second doctor has now completed his examination. The third and final doctor is in the process of making his check.

The examination is completed. Stand by for the superintendent's time of death and confirmation of death.

The superintendent has advised all witnesses that death did occur at 12:24 this date. He has instructed all witnesses to depart the witness room and to be transported back to the front of the institution. Curtains are drawn at this time. Colonel Lowe? Mickey? That completes it.

LOWE: Marable, see if you could find what that snap pop was that you were talking about a while ago.

MARABLE: I think it was just the electricity arc. I don't think any strap broke or anything. He just jerked real hard and caused the electricity to arc.

LOWE: Okay.

MARABLE: They have removed the face hood. The execution-team members are now in the process of removing the straps. The electrical wire has been removed from the condemned's right leg. He is being removed from the electric chair at this time and being placed on the stretcher. He is being removed from the execution chamber at this time and the execution-team members are taking him to the autopsy room. And that's all I can see, Colonel Lowe.

LOWE: Is the commissioner available?

MARABLE: Just a minute.

KEMP: Hello.

LOWE: You and your staff did an excellent job. We appreciate it very much.

KEMP: Okay. We had a little bit of a scare— I don't know if they relayed that to you or not.

LOWE: Pop.

KEMP: The popping sound. We were thinking that what happened because he sat there for that three minutes, that the water in the sponge on his leg ran out right there by his foot, and we were thinking that it was like a little bolt of lightning.

LOWE: Did you see anything?

KEMP: No. They said— Colonel Hardison and the other people in the witness room said they didn't see anything like that. Now I still feel good about it.

LOWE: It ran too smooth, Ralph, but don't screw it up next time.

KEMP [*laughing*]: Okay.

LOWE: Mike Bowers wants to say something.

KEMP: Okay.

BOWERS: Ralph, I second what Dave said. Very smooth job.

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other one.

FEMP: Here he is. Just a second, Colonel.

MARABLE: You're quite welcome, sir. Any time. Good night.

MARABLE: Good night, sir.

[Character Study]

AT HOME WITH HITLER

From a secret profile of Adolf Hitler compiled by the U.S. Office of Strategic Services, the precursor to the CIA, in December 1942. The sixty-eight-page report, portions of which appeared on www.thesmokinggun.com, was declassified in April under the Nazi War Crimes Disclosure Act. Nearly 3 million records have been released since the legislation was passed by Congress in 1998.

Hitler is meticulous about his personal appearance and will never remove his coat in public—no matter how warm he feels. He allows no one to see him in his bath or see him naked. In his dress he is always very conventional and takes the advice of his tailor. He puts on the clothes that are laid out for him without any fussiness. He never uses perfume. Dr. Sedgwick [former Nazi press secretary] at various times brought back from England Yardley's lavender smelling salts, which he [illegible] or during trips by plane to get away from the smell of gasoline. Hitler always objected to Dr. Sedgwick's use of perfume and twitted him about it.

In 1923 Dr. Sedgwick, who disliked Hitler's little mustache, tried to convince him of its ugliness, arguing that it should extend to the full width of the mouth. Dr. Sedgwick said: "Look at the portraits by Holbein and Van Dyck, the old masters would never have dreamt of such an ugly fashion!" Hitler replied: "Do not worry about my mustache. If it is not the fashion now, it will be later because I wear it."

ENDURANCE

Hitler is quite robust and has a good deal of physical endurance. In 1932 he and his staff often worked twenty hours a day for weeks on end. After a long and heavy day and missing one or two meals he always insists on his chauffeurs and staff eating first. He himself will eat last. If food is placed before him by some enthusiastic waitress he will carry it himself to the chauffeurs.

He is completely uninterested in either indoor or outdoor games. He takes no exercise other than walking and this at irregular intervals. His pacing of the room is frequent and done *a la marcia*, to a tune which he whistles. He never walks the length of the room but always diagonally from corner to corner.

For parades he uses an open car regardless of the weather. He demands the same of his entire entourage.

Hitler says: "We are not bourgeois but soldiers."

SIGHT

To be with Hitler, particularly at night, is an ordeal for people with sensitive eyes due to the brilliant light he always insists on having all round him. Dr. Sedgwick was forced to the conclusion that Hitler's eyes were not normal, which might have been caused by gas poisoning in the fall of 1918. On account of headaches caused by his eyes, Hitler has had to follow the advice of his physicians and now wears reading glasses. He probably resisted this for as long as it was possible. Partly from vanity and partly through his contempt for the "Professor Type," spectacles have always been a nightmare for him.

CONVERSATION

During meals Hitler is apt to let the conversation be general, but after an hour or two he starts a monologue. These monologues form part of a fixed repertoire. They will be of a finished perfection like phonograph records—the favorite ones being: "When I was in Vienna" and "When I was a soldier," "When I was in prison," "When I was the leader in the early days of the Party," and so forth.

He frequently gets onto the subject of Richard Wagner and the opera. No one interrupts these encore rhapsodies. He carries on with these until the guests finally break down and retire because they can no longer keep their eyes open.

ENTERTAINMENT

The music disliked by Hitler is mainly confined to the Classics, particularly music by Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Brahms. To these renderings he listens only with relative attention. He enjoys gypsy music, rhapsodies, and czardas, also music by Liszt and the dreamy music of Grieg. Wagner, Verdi, and certain pieces by Chopin and Richard Strauss delight him. Music which does not lift him out of his seat









Executioner's Room, Greenhaven Correctional Facility, Greenhaven, New York; "Electric Chair," Louisiana State Penitentiary, Louisiana; "Electric Chair," Holman Unit, Atmore, Alabama; and "Witness Room," Florida State Prison, Starke, South Carolina," by Lucinda Devlin, from The Omega Suites, *[illegible]*

by its sensuous appeal leaves him cold.

In 1923 he adored American football marches and college songs. The "Sieg Heil!" used in all political rallies is a direct copy of the technique used by American football cheerleaders. American College type of music was used to excite the German masses who had been used to very dry-as dust political lectures.

DANCING

Hitler never dances himself. He considers it unworthy of a Statesman but is more than willing to watch others for a time. This may be associated with an inner desire for erotic adventure by proxy. The demimondaine character of the women in question does not by any means lower his sense [illegible]

He very rarely goes to the theater.

VAUDEVILLE

Almost every night or every other night Hitler sees a picture in his private theater in the Chancellery. Goebbels procures for him pictures which are not to be shown publicly in Germany. These consist mainly of foreign motion pictures which might cause Communistic and other demonstrations during the performance.

He enjoys newsreels, particularly those featuring himself. He likes comedias and will laugh heartily at a Jewish comedian. He even likes a Jewish singer and will say afterward that it is too bad he or she is not an Aryan!

Movies are made of political prisoners and executions and this satisfies his sadistic instincts. There is reason to believe that he is also shown pornographic photographs and movies.

He loves the circus. The thrill of underpaid performers risking their lives is a real pleasure to him. He is particularly pleased with tightrope acts and trapeze artists.

During the summer of 1933 he went several times to the circus and on the next day he would send flowers and chocolates to the girls who had performed dangerous feats before him. He remembered the names of these people and in the event of an accident to one of them would concern himself with what happened to them or to their surviving relatives. Upon one occasion after reading an account in the newspaper of a trapeze artist who was killed during her act he sent a message of sympathy to the family. (N.B. The appeal of the non-bourgeois—"the gypsy milieu of circus artists.")

He does not care much for wild animal acts, unless there is a woman in danger.

[Objection]

TIBET NOIR

From an email sent last April by Minnesota state representative Arlon Lindner to his colleagues prior to the Dalai Lama's speech to a joint meeting of the Minnesota House and Senate. Minnesota is home to the second-largest Tibetan community in the United States.

As a Christian, I am offended that we would have the Dalai Lama come and speak to a joint meeting of our Minnesota legislature. He claims to be a god-king, a leader of the Buddha religion, which historically has been considered a cult because of its antibiblical teachings concerning the one true Holy God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and His Son, Jesus Christ.

There is a religious ethic that prevails in this country: Judeo-Christian. The Judeo-Christian ethic is the moral and spiritual foundation of our Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and most of our laws, and it has served us well.

A Buddhist would say, "Why the big fuss about abortion and euthanasia? After all, we are all reincarnated over and over again in many lives, so why the big deal about ending one?" These beliefs are incompatible with the Christian principles that have governed America.

Rabbi Daniel Lapin [a syndicated radio personality] expressed it best: "We may all believe as we wish; however, translating our beliefs into actions sometimes demanded by those beliefs must conform with Judeo-Christian belief. When they do, it is the actions informed by Christian belief that will prevail."

I, for one, will not be present on the morning of May 9.

[Letter]

AS LONG AS THERE ARE POPPIES

From a letter by Shahla Lahiji, an Iranian editor and feminist who in January was sentenced to four years in prison for attending a conference in Berlin on Iranian democracy. Although the trip was approved by Islamic authorities, the conference was later deemed anti-Islamic because a male protester publicly disrobed there and a woman danced with bare arms. The letter, which was originally published in Payam Emrooz, *a monthly review, appeared in English on www.payvand.com, a website devoted to Iranian culture and politics. Mehrangiz Kar, a children's-rights lawyer who also attended the conference, received a four-year sentence as well. Translated from the Persian by Roya Monajem.*

I am running in a dark narrow corridor. The sound of my heart beating and the echo of my feet striking the ground resonate in the corridor like the sound of iron against iron and, to-

gether with the sound of the feet chasing me, fill my soul with horror. I feel an intense pain in my feet. But I know I must keep running. I am escaping from some strangers who are chasing me. I pass through the bend of the corridor, and I see a light at the other end. If only I could reach that light I would be saved. My heart is exploding. Suddenly I run into something, and a sharp pain overtakes my whole body, and I stagger and fall down. I can no longer move. I put my hands over my head as though protecting it from an unknown attack. The sound of the feet chasing me gets closer and closer. God, where is my scarf? If they find me without a scarf . . . It is no use trying to get up. My feet are not under my control. I scream, and darkness envelops me.

I wake to the sound of my own screaming. It is as if my heart were coming out of my throat. My mouth is parched. I am in my own bed. The nightmare is over. I look at the clock above my head. It is five-thirty in the morning, and I have to report to the Revolution Court at eight-thirty. It is too early to get up, but I am scared to sleep lest the nightmare come back.

I wash my face and feel a bit better. At eight o'clock I am standing in the courtyard.

For years I have hated the name "Luna Park" and especially that tall merry-go-round that looks like a scaffold as well as that narrow winding road leading to Evin Prison. And now here I am in front of the gray iron doors of Evin Prison sitting in a car with the driver honking the horn for the guards to open the gate. The gate swings open, and I find myself inside the prison.

Like a somnambulist, I step out of the car by the order of the official. It is as if a thin mist surrounds me and everything appears like a slow-motion movie. The sounds are like that, too—vague and incomprehensible.

Office of identification, a number hung around the neck—flash—the whole face—sideways—flash. Ink fingerprints. The woman carrying out the physical inspection asks, "Your crime?" I do not answer.

"Drugs?" she asks.

I shake my head. Check forging? No. Fighting? No. Theft? No.

"What was it then?"

"I don't know."

"Everyone here claims to be innocent."

"I didn't say I am innocent. I just said, I don't know."

Pause.

"Berlin Conference."

"Aha. That dancing and show." Silence. "Was it you?"

"You must be kidding."

"Then who was it?"

"I don't know."

She puts on disposable plastic gloves. "What is that for?" I ask tentatively.

She drops her head and says, "Regulations. I have to obey the orders. I'm sorry."

I want to tear myself apart out of rage.

I am so exhausted I think I will collapse. When will this be over? I feel like lying on the floor. There is a chair near the exit; I look at it with longing. Somebody says: "Sit on that chair and wait for the car."

One of the legs of the chair is broken, so as soon as I sit on it, it breaks into pieces, and I fall on the ground. Tears well up behind my eyelids. I have to struggle to prevent them from pouring down. I get up with difficulty.

The car arrives. We get in. A steep road. That thin mist is still there. Another iron door opens. Another steep road. "210?" the driver asks. "209," the guard (a woman) answers. The mist thickens. The end of the world. The end of the road—another gray door. The car stops. "Get out."

The deafening sound of the bell—the door opens. The figure of a woman with black chador in dark light. I cannot see her face. "Here is the prisoner."

[Advertisement]

BUST IN THE WIND





This advertisement, for the Ford Motor Company's Ford Ka, ran in South Africa in 2002. The Advertising Standards Authority upheld complaints from human-rights groups and deemed the campaign "a mockery of African culture."



The Hotel Dyadic, *from May DeVinney's Working Saints series, was on display last fall at Viridian Artists Inc. in New York City*

"Come in this way."

We pass through another door. A small yard. Another door, another door.

We enter a long corridor. It looks very familiar. It reminds me of my nightmare. "Your belongings."

"I don't have anything."

There are small doors on both sides of the corridor. Everything is gray.

"Follow me." She stops in front of a closed door and opens it. "Get in."

I enter the cell. The door closes behind my back. Immediately, I turn back. "I would like to use the toilet."

Through a small window installed on the door she says, "It is in your cell. You should not talk here. This is a solitary cell. No more talking."

"But ..."

"That is what I say."

I look around. So this is what a solitary cell looks like. A small space, two meters by one and a half. There is a gray soldier's blanket on the floor. I am standing in the middle of the cell. Flabbergasted. I glance at the black object that looks like a toilet bowl. It is ghastly. I turn the tap. There is no water. I hit against the door with the palm of my hand. The small window opens.

"What is the matter?"

"There is no water."

"So what?"

"I need to use the toilet."

"Wait a second." The door opens. "The public toilet is there. I see that one, but don't make any noise."

Once again I step into the gray corridor with small gray doors, all closed. I enter the toilet. There is no light. With a solemn face, the guard stands in the middle of the corridor. Then she takes me back to my cell. Before closing the door, I ask: "Where is the lady who was with me? Mrs. Kar."

"We have no such person here."

"I saw her myself. We were together. I'd just like to know how she is."

"She must have been transferred somewhere else."

"I—"

"No more talking."

The door closes with a dry sound, and I stand in the middle of the cell. A feeble gray light illuminates the space. My swollen feet hurt. I lean against the wall. *Behind this stony wall/you and I are imprisoned/I hear the melancholy singing of a woman. Go on singing.* There are two thick pipes sticking out of the wall that go back into the wall a bit further down. They are covered with a thick layer of dust and dirt.

The small window in the door opens and a pair of eyes stare at me. "Why are you standing there?"

"What should I do?"

"Sit down."

"I can't. It is very dirty here. The blanket is full of vomit and dirt."

The window closes and I hear the key turning in the keyhole and the door opens. "Take this."

"What is it?"

"Supper." A piece of bread and some halva shekari.

"I can't, my throat is dry."

"There is water in the tap."

"There is no water in the tap."

"Try the other tap."

"I don't have a glass."

"You should buy a paper cup and plate. 150 toumans."

"All right." I don't know what to do with the bread and halva. The door opens again. Three glasses, one plastic spoon, and a plate. I take them with my other hand and put them on the floor. I pay for them. The door is closed again. I put the bread and halva on the plate and hold the glass below the tap. The water smells of naphtha. I bang against the door. The small window opens.

"What is wrong now?"

"The water smells of naphtha. I just want a glass of water."

"Look, this is Evin Prison. Evin Hotel is further down."

"But—"

"I have no but. Be quiet and don't make any more noise. Otherwise—"

The door closes with a deafening sound. I force myself to drink the water. I lean against the wall with my swollen feet still in shoes. A large black beetle moves down the wall near the toilet bowl. I don't even bother to kill it. I follow it with my eyes as it crawls beneath the blanket and disappears. I can't think. While still standing, I lean my head against the wall and close my eyes.

It is as though I have plunged into a deep well. Deeper and deeper I go into this well. I open my eyes fearfully. My feet are in agony. I look at my watch. It is four o'clock in the morning. I can't bear to stand anymore. I throw aside the blanket with my foot and wrap myself in my chador and sit on the floor with my head against the wall. The mist becomes thicker. I close my eyelids again and extend my legs.

I open my eyes. Sunlight fills the room from

[Memorandum]

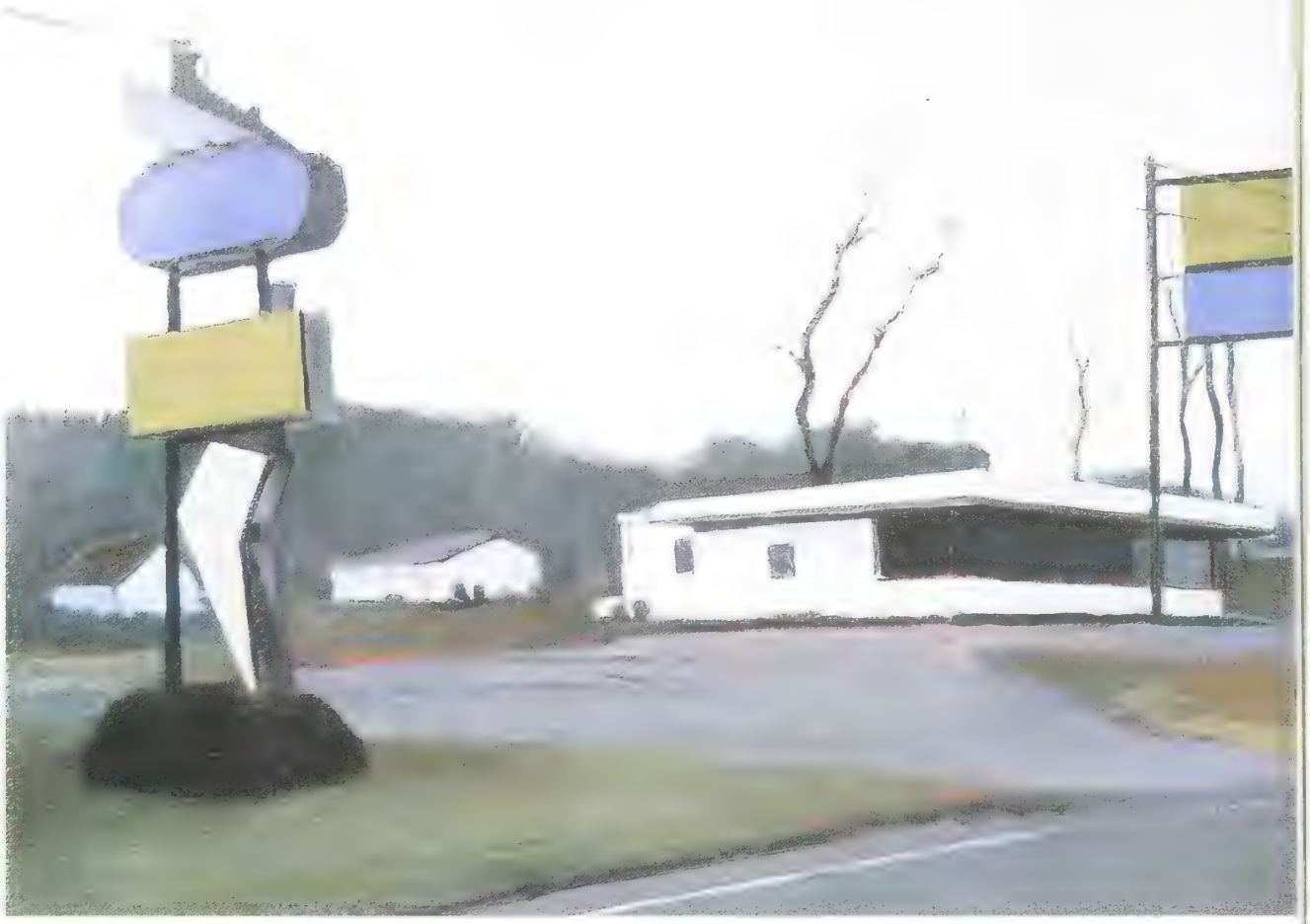
YOU CAN LEAVE YOUR HAT ON

From a June 7 memo circulated in the South Carolina House of Representatives

TO: Female pages, female staff, etc.
FROM: The Men's Caucus
RE: Proper attire
DATE: Immediately

Having received an improper memo regarding appropriate dress in the House Chamber, the Men's Caucus does hereby propose the following regulations:

- Dresses should be no longer than four inches above the knee.
- Pages will receive additional merit pay for economizing and saving valuable material used in blouse construction.
- Hose is clearly optional.
- The terms "babe," "honey," "sugar," and "little missy" should be accepted as compliments and terms of endearment.
- Undergarments [illegible] should be seen [illegible] optional.
- Any future memos from the Women's Caucus concerning attire will hereby be ignored.



Ideal Homes, 1999, a painting by Christopher Johnson, whose work was on view in May at Plus Ultra gallery in Brooklyn.

the cup. I look the window and the clay bounded clefts of the windowsill. The pale light of the cell is lost in the sunlight. And I start my first day in the solitary cell of Evin Prison. It is [illegible]. A key turns in the keyhole. The door opens. A young face behind a trolley looks at me in amazement.

"Breakfast. Would you like a cup of tea?"

God, I feel so thirsty. Joyfully I say: "Of course. May I have two cups?"

"Yes, sir."

I take off my shoes and put my inflated feet on the cool mosaics of the cell. I drink the tea with great pleasure. It has a strange smell, but it doesn't matter: it is tea. I look around. The beautiful April sun has conquered the cell and graciously bestows its light. A stem of wild [illegible] appears behind the [illegible] window. Outside spring is blooming. The thick mists have disappeared. And I am here in prison. I notice an engraving on the wall of the cell: "Life should go on as long as there are poppies." [illegible] Where will I be in prison cell [illegible]

[Essay]

MESSAGES ON A SANDSTONE BLUFF

By Evan S. Connell, in The Aztec Treasure House: New and Selected Essays, *to be published next month by Counterpoint Press. The essay originally appeared in* Preservation *magazine. Connell is the author of seventeen books, including* Son of the Morning Star *and* Deus Lo Volt!

Captain Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá relates in *Historia de la Nueva México* that he expected his miserable life to end at any moment when—famished and burning with thirst—he discovered a pool of water at the base of some lofty cliffs. The year was 1598, and the sandstone bluff where he found water faces the Zuñi Mountains in western New Mexico. Spanish explorers of the next cen-

tury would call it El Morro, a name perhaps derived from *morra*, a Basque word meaning the crown of the head. Nineteenth-century Americans would call it Inscription Rock, because a gallery of prehistoric pictographs mingled with Spanish and English names and messages for several hundred yards along the base.

Capt. Villagrá belonged to the colonizing expedition of Don Juan de Oñate. Just why Villagrá was alone in this arid land is not entirely clear; but he had lost his horse, which plunged into a pit dug by Indians, and he was almost dead when three of Oñate's soldiers accidentally found him. His sword and dagger were missing, his feet were swollen so badly that he was unable to walk; according to Oñate's journal, the captain had eaten nothing for several days.

Seven years later Oñate would camp beside the pool of water where Capt. Villagrá nearly died, and he would leave this announcement on the cliff:

Paso por aquí el adelantado Dom
Juan de Oñate del descubrimient de
la mar del sur a 16 de Abril de 1605.

That is, he passed by this place after discovering the Sea of the South—the Pacific. Oñate had marched some 600 miles to the Gulf of California fifteen years before the Pilgrims touched Plymouth Rock.

Paso por aquí . . . appears again and again.

Along came a certain captain general of the provinces of New Mexico, assumed to be Gov. Don Juan de Eulate, whose 1620 message on El Morro stated that he had subdued the Zuñi pueblo with clemency, zeal, and prudence, being a great gentleman and gallant soldier not apt to be forgotten. Somebody in the party thought less of his character, because *gran caballero* was scratched out, almost obliterated.

Spanish efforts to Christianize the Zuñi and Hopi were at times nominally successful; more often the result was sullen compliance, deceit, or hostility. Fray Francisco Letrado became the first martyr, killed at Zuñi pueblo on February 22, 1632, a week or so after his arrival. Father Letrado may have antagonized the natives by insisting that they attend mass on a day that was important to their own religion. Whatever the cause, soldiers left Santa Fe to avenge his death. One member of this company carved an ominous warning on the rock:

Se passaron a 23 de Marzo de 1632
años a la venganza de muerte del
Padre Letrado.

In 1680 the pueblo natives revolted, butchering 400 settlers, officials, and priests. Those who escaped the massacre fled south along the Rio Grande to El Paso, and for the next twelve years the Indians lived as they had always lived. Then came a Spanish army led by the redoubtable Diego José de Vargas Zapata y Lujan Ponce de León y Contreras, who quickly reconquered New Mexico. On the cliff his name is abbreviated:

Aqui estubo el General Don Diego
de Vargas con toda su gente

Gen. Juan Paez Hurtado passed this way on a tour of inspection, July 14, 1736. Beneath the general's name is another, carved with less authority, probably in haste, by a corporal who lagged behind to immortalize himself: *y en su compania el Cabo, Joseph Truxillo.*

One year later the most illustrious Bishop of Durango, Don Martin de Elizacochea, passed at El Morro. Two inscriptions a few yards apart, but cut in the same style, suggest that both were done by his secretary, *el Bachiller Don Juan Ignacio de Arrassain*—a bachelor of law or of the arts.

Many travelers who camped by the pool, or at least stopped to drink, are unknown. *Por aqui paso Andres Romero.* Who was he? Where was he going? The inscription dates from 1774. Beyond that, scholars have learned nothing.

Then came the Americans.

Lt. J.H. Simpson, U.S.A., R.H. Kern, Artist, visited and copied these inscriptions September 16th, 1849.

[Curse]

SOUTHERN DISCOMFIT

The following inscription, directed to Confederate president Jefferson Davis, was discovered in March on a wall at the Frederick County Courthouse in Winchester, Virginia. Interpretations vary.

To Jeff. Davis:
May he be set adrift
boat without compass or rudder then that any
contents be swallowed
by a shark the shark by a whale
whale in the Devil's belly and the
Devil in hell the
and further
may he be put in the northwest
corner with
ashes in his eyes for all
eternity.



[illegible] Courtesy Tucson Gallery of Western Art

[illegible] harly interesting . . ." Interesting, too, is a slight [illegible] tions" — with a tiny proofreader's mark below the word pointing to a tiny "r" above.

[illegible] about 250 feet high, "of a pearly whitish aspect." The natural buttresses reminded him of heavy Egyptian architecture. That night he and Kern talked about what they had seen — "the grim visage of the stupendous mass behind us occasionally fastening our attention by the sublimity of its appearance in the dim twilight." Simpson had [illegible] ground, excitement, and howling wolves.

More and more Anglo names decorated the rock as the nation pushed westward.

Lt. Edward Fitzgerald Beale, formerly of the U.S. Navy, subsequently employed by the Department of Indian Affairs, arrived in 1857 at the head of a camel caravan. This may sound implausible, but the desert Southwest had to be crossed. What better vehicle than the famous ship of the desert? Accordingly, the government bought some camels in Syria, Turkey, and/or Egypt. By one account, the beasts were assembled at Smyrna and shipped to Indianola, Texas, for training. In any event, twenty-five camels under the command of Lt. Beale, assisted by a Virginia Military Institute graduate named P. Gilmer "Peachy" Breckinridge, plodded out of Texas to-

ward the West Coast. This remarkable column included a Syrian camel driver known as Hi Jolly because he saluted one and all with the Levantine greeting: *"Hadj Ali!"*

Lt. Beale & Co. reached El Morro on August 23, 1857. His animals undoubtedly drank quite a bit of the pool. From El Morro they proceeded at a dignified pace, eventually reaching California.

Beale and Breckinridge returned two years later, adding their names to the roster. *Lt. Beale*—on the wall of a shallow cave—is difficult to see. Breckinridge, less introverted, carved his name where the sun would shine on it, using stately capitals in the so-called tombstone style. He was killed fighting for the Confederacy at Kennon's Landing, Virginia, in 1863.

Not long after Beale's 1857 visit an emigrant train stopped for water. It was led by a Baptist preacher from Missouri named John Udell, and trailed by a herd of cattle. Quite a few members of this party scratched their names on the cliff. Udell noted his age, sixty-three, and *First Emigrant*—with the letter "n" reversed—just under the inscription by Gen. de Vargas. From El Morro these wagons followed the camel route, but on the east bank of the Colorado River there was trouble with Mohave Indians. Eight emigrants were killed, others wounded, and Mohaves stole most of the livestock. California suddenly had become an impossible dream, so the party turned around and walked back to New Mexico.

Ten years after Udell's tragic journey a crew of Union Pacific surveyors visited the historic rock, which explains why several names are accompanied by UPR, as though they were fraternity brothers.

In 1906, Teddy Roosevelt declared El Morro a national monument. A tract of 160 acres was set aside. The proclamation warned all persons "not to appropriate, excavate, injure or destroy said monument . . ."

Eighty miles west of Albuquerque a two-lane blacktop loops south from Interstate 40 and climbs through scrub evergreens to the Zuñi reservation. Except for the narrow road, this high desert probably looks very much as it did when the earliest hunters arrived. Weathered sandstone mesas, dusty slopes, juniper, piñon, cactus. At 7,800 feet one rolls across the Continental Divide and presently turns left to the ranger station.

Inside, a museum displays just about what one expects: artifacts, pottery, written summaries, illustrative scenes. Unexpectedly, though not illogically, there is the tarnished steel helmet, breastplate, and long sword of a conquistador.

Outside, everything becomes subordinate to the cliff. One hears the wind like a distant river, maybe the croak of a raven. Otherwise the silence is that of all ancient, uninhabited places. Nothing overshadows the cliff, nothing approaches.

The writer Mary Austin visited El Morro in 1923. Presumably she drank from the pool, because she describes the water as "sweet," blue, and amber-shadowed. Today it is murky green and looks poisonous, with some ugly little amphibians called mud puppies nosing through the bulrushes and spiders skating on the surface. Unless you are as thirsty as Capt. Villagrá, you probably will not stoop to drink. Although decades have passed since Austin's visit, she would find the pictographs unchanged: mountain sheep, lightning bolts, votive hands, stick figures, geometric forms, parrots—brought by traders from old Mexico en route to Chaco—snakes, deer, and one creature that must be a lizard but resembles a crocodile. High above, indifferent to human concerns, migratory swallows have plastered the vertical palisade with hundreds of mud nests.

Finally, around the north face, where the sun rarely shines, a path leads to the summit. Here the wind sings as it has from the beginning, and if you are subject to vertigo you do not stand close to the edge because the big ponderosa pines are far below.

Here, mostly underground, are the remnants of two A'ts'ina pueblos—a Zuñi word that means writing-on-rock. Both were built during the late thirteenth century but were abandoned after sixty or seventy years. Why? Drought? Enemies? There is no water on the summit unless it rains, so why did the Old Ones settle on top? They might have been afraid to live below, where they were vulnerable. Or perhaps they liked the view.

The small ruin has not been touched, and the National Park Service has excavated only one corner of the large pueblo. Two ceremonial rooms, kivas, are exposed. One is round, the other square. Round kivas were built by the Anasazi people of the northern Four Corners area—Utah-Colorado-Arizona-New Mexico. Square kivas were built by the Mogollon people of southern Arizona and New Mexico. On top of El Morro these cultures met. What brought them together? If the day is pleasant, you might see a couple of butterflies playing tag in the wind above the ruins. Maybe it's that simple.

Mary Austin fell in love so deeply with El Morro that she wanted to be buried on the cliff. This could not be done—her ashes are cemented into a boulder of the Sangre de Cristo range overlooking Santa Fe—but she expressed her great love in *The Land of Journey's Ending:* "You, of a hundred years from now, if when you visit the Rock, you see the cupped silken wings of the argemone burst and float apart when there is no wind; or if, when all around is still, a sudden stir in the short-leaved pines, or fresh eagle feathers blown upon the shrine, that will be I . . ." ■

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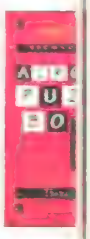
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THE AMERICAN ROME

On the theory of virtuous empire

By Lewis H. Lapham

Innocence is like a dumb leper who has lost his bell, wandering the world, meaning no harm.

Graham Greene

When the United States in early May lost its seat on the United Nations' Human Rights Commission in Geneva, the immediate response in New York and Washington was one of genuine astonishment. Important people looked questioningly at their cell phones and didn't know whether they'd heard a false rumor or a foolish joke. How could such things be, and where had reason fled? Surely it was well known that America had invented human rights, forever coming to the rescue of lost children and failed democracies. Never before in the fifty-four years of the commission's existence had the United States been excluded from the committee rooms of conscience; never in living memory had the "world's only superpower" suffered so undeserved a mockery at the hands of its ungrateful dependents.

The offending gesture, an organizational vote within the U.N. Economic and Social Council, took place on a Thursday in Switzerland, and by nightfall on the nearer shore of the Atlantic a hastily assembled quorum of gold-plated American opinion (prominent journalists, responsible politicians, dependable historians) was hurrying into print or a television studio with the offers of an explanation. For the most part they resembled late-Victorian British admirals on loan from an operetta by Gilbert and Sullivan. Thirty seconds into the broadcast or two paragraphs down the page the initial expressions of disbelief swelled into an uproar of heavy sarcasms, dark frowns, indignant manifestations of injured vanity, wounded virtue, baffled omnipotence. Was there no limit to the world's effrontery and gall? Were these people imbeciles or merely impertinent? Had they forgotten that they owed their freedom to sit around talking nonsense in overpriced restaurants to America's benevolence, America's money, America's air force?

The admirals were accustomed to insults from the Algerians and Fidel Castro, but what they found incomprehensible was the treachery of the European plenipotentiaries who were supposed to be our friends. The commission every year realigns its membership in such a way that the bloc of Western democracies receives three of the open seats, one of them cus-

THE NEW REPUBLICAN OLIGARCHY HAS NOT SHOWN MUCH RESPECT FOR WHAT ITS DRUM MAJORS DISPARAGE AS "[illegible]"

tomarily reserved to the United States if the United States comes up fo reelection. But this year something went wrong with the divine right o kings, and when the secret ballot was counted the United States had re ceived only twenty-nine of fifty-three possible votes, as opposed to fifty two for France, forty-one for Austria, thirty-two for Sweden. Prior to th voting no fewer than forty-three countries had provided Secretary of Stat Colin Powell with written assurances of their support. The result reduce fourteen of the letters to worthless scraps of paper, which was preposte ous, unspeakable, not to be borne. I didn't watch all the Washington tal shows or read all the newspaper commentaries, but those that I did se didn't foster much aberration in tone and theme.

"TYRANTS TAKE OVER"—headline in the *Wall Street Journal* over an ed rial thundering the point that the United States had been expelled from a com mission that welcomed among its members representatives from Libya, Sudan and Syria—i.e., countries not known to cherish a concern for human rights.

"Thugs' club . . . a sewer of brutality and repression"—characterization of th Human Rights Commission in a *New York Post* editorial suggesting that th U.N. [illegible] in Fort Manhattan.

"Sneak diplomatic attack"—William Safire in the *New York Times* explaining the U.N. vote as a plot "led by Communist China and Communist Cuba, an with the connivance of French diplomats currying favor with African and Ara dictators"; the purpose of the plot revealed as an attempt by a backstabbin [illegible] to punish the United States for taking the side of Israel "the war started by order of Yasir Arafat."

"New period of official anti-Americanism"—Michael Kelly in the *Washington Post* attributing America's loss of its seat on the commission to the envy and re sentment of the European members, "because Europe's ruling classes will neve forgive us for constructing a world in which they no longer rule over anythin [illegible]."

Amidst the hectic waving of flags a few bystanders (some journalists, not many politicians) observed that the rebuff in Geneva wasn't entirely un warranted. The United States over the last several years has been slow to pay its U.N. dues (the account currently $1.3 billion in arrears), and it stands opposed to a long list of policy initiatives put forward in the name of human rights, among them the Kyoto Protocol limiting emissions of car bon dioxide into the earth's atmosphere and the treaty establishing an in ternational criminal court. Nor has the newly enskyed Republican oli garchy in Washington shown much respect for what its drum majors in Congress and the Pentagon disparage as "weak-kneed multilateralism." President Bush prefers the more manly acts of "unabashed unilateralism," and during his first few months in office the American government bombed Baghdad, bullied the Russians, announced its intention to nullify the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, guaranteed the prospect of war in Asia if China fools around with the sovereignty of Taiwan. Yes, it was pos sible that some countries (the poorer countries certainly, even some Eu ropean countries clinging to the memories of their former grandeur) might have their reasons for objecting to the shows of American resolve, and one could almost see (if one looked very closely and imagined one self as feckless as Italy or as obstinate as Germany) how it might be possi ble to misperceive America's fundamental goodness of heart.

As cautious as they were faint, the voices not raised in righteous anger didn't rate much space in the papers, and they were easily shouted down by the operatic chorus deploring the affront in early May in a tone consis tent with Charles Krauthammer's trumpet solo in *Time* magazine in early March.

> America is no mere international citizen. It is the dominant power in the world, more dominant than any since Rome. Accordingly, America is in a posi-

BECAUSE GOD HAD CHOSEN AMERICA AS THE CONSTRUCTION SITE OF THE EARTHLY PARADISE, NOTHING WAS EVER AMERICA'S FAULT



Although heartily endorsed by the Republican members of Congress, [illegible] by the kind of people who think the phrase "world's only superpower" [illegible] Homeric epithet like "rosy-fingered dawn" or "wine-dark sea," the [illegible]me Inc. theory of the American Rome doesn't travel well. The topic [illegible]s often in the conversation during a week in April when I was in Paris [illegible] talk to a French publisher, but the feeling of resentment was less apparent than a sense of disappointment. An author of enigmatic novels cited a [illegible]cent poll of French public opinion that asked for "images that come to [illegible]nd when you think of America." Presented with a short list of words [illegible]plicable to the United States, a majority of the respondents chose synonyms for barbarism: "violence" (67 percent), "power" (66 percent), "inequality" (49 percent), and "racism" (42 percent); only 20 percent mentioned "freedom," and 4 percent "generosity."

Not the same people who had come ashore on Omaha Beach in June of 1944, and even a columnist from *Le Monde* wanted to know what had become of the freedom-loving Americans of song and story—woefully uncultured, of course, also vulgar and naive, but generous to a fault and true to their faith in their fellow man. The wits at the dinner tables on both banks of the Seine didn't omit the customary hors d'oeuvres of scorn (President Bush described as "a ventriloquist's dummy," also as "the Forrest Gump of American politics"), but where was the once-upon-a-time democratic republic, and why were they inclined to think of the United States as a department store or a stomach, not as the embodiment of a courageous principle or an ennobling idea? Somewhere in the endgame of the Cold War the old citizen army apparently had gotten lost, replaced by a generation of would-be hegemons toying with the dream of empire. The rulers of artisan cheeses didn't question the American wish to strike handsome Roman poses in the forum as "the world's only superpower," but they perceived the problem in logic. How did the inheritors of a stupendous military and economic fortune mean to balance the harsh imperatives of power against the softer claims of conscience? Unlike the Americans, the ancient Romans didn't confuse the conquering of distant provinces with the distribution of global happiness, and where did the executives of Coca-Cola bottling companies propose to find the moral and intellectual sangfroid to manage civil unrest in Judea, famine in Egypt, rebellion in Parthia and Leptis Minor? Vice President Dick Cheney might be a tough-minded businessman, but who could imagine even Dick Cheney proscribing the crucifixion of 2,000 inmates?

The same questions were asked on four successive evenings, and gradually it occurred to me that the French didn't fully appreciate the doctrine of American innocence, what the first Puritans in the Massachusetts wilderness understood as their special appointment from Providence. Because God had chosen America as the construction site of the earthly Paradise, America's cause was always just and nothing was ever America's fault. Subsequent generations of American prophets and politicians have expressed the belief in different words—America, "The Last, Best Hope of Mankind"; America "the Ark of Safety, the Anointed Civilizer"—but no one of the witnesses ever fails to understand that whereas corrupt foreigners commit crimes against humanity, Americans cleanse the world of its impurities. We do so because we have a natural aptitude for the work and because without our humanitarian interventions (over Dresden and

WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF REVELATION, NOT HISTORY BECAUSE WE HAVE AN INSTINCT FOR THE GOOD, WE NEED NOT CONCERN OURSELVES WITH LAW

Hiroshima as well as at Chateau-Thierry and Iwo Jima) the whole schem of creation might come loose in the wind and vanish in the night.

If every now and then an American commits a monstrous crime—Le Harvey Oswald, Lt. William Calley, Timothy McVeigh—the action is de clared un-American, senseless, unthinkable, so contrary to the laws of na ture and the will of God that it can be intelligibly discussed only by senio churchmen and high-priced psychiatrists.[1] Never intrinsic to the Ameri can landscape or the American character, evil is a deadly and unlicense import, an outlandish disease smuggled through customs in a shipment o German philosophy or Asian rice. Innocent by definition, America invari ably finds itself betrayed (at Pearl Harbor, the Little Big Horn, Havan Bay), and because we have been betrayed we always ca justify the use of brutal or un-Christian means to defen the Ark of Safety against the world's treachery.



Which is why America never needs to appoint truth commissions similar to those established by South Africa, Chile, Burundi, and any other country seekin to come to terms with its inevitably tragic past. Th American past isn't tragic. We are the children of reve lation, not history, and together with the twice-bor President Bush we can assume that because we posses a natural instinct for the good, we need not concer ourselves with law. Laws are for people unlucky enoug to have been born without the DNA of virtue. Mayb Dick Cheney lacks the Emperor Nero's readiness t light a garden party with torches made from the sti living remnants of 2,000 Christian slaves, but Ameri can B-52s can stack dead civilians like cordwood in th rubble of Hanoi, the pilots safe in the knowledge tha they are doing what is right, their bombing runs bring ing the good news that salvation is near at hand.

No matter how often I explained the American rul of engagement that allowed for its blameless passag through the labyrinth of twentieth-century atrocity, I failed to persuad the French of the necessary distinction between ethnic and mora cleansing. When the other people at the table didn't scoff at th weakness of the reasoning, they charged me wit cynicism or suspected an elaborate absurdity in imitatio of Beckett or Céline.

A week later I returned to New York to find most of the eminen journalists in the city sprinkling incense on the news that Bob Kerrey— former senator from Nebraska, recipient of the Congressional Medal o Honor, voice of democratic conscience, president of The New Schoo University in New York City—conceivably deserved to be reconfigured a a war criminal. The allegation took the form of a report published in *Th New York Times Magazine* during the same week that the United Nation expelled the United States from the Human Rights Commission in Gene va, and the two events coming so close together in time coordinated th media's efforts to illuminate the doctrine of American grace.

The charge against Kerrey was backdated to the war in Vietnam. As twenty-five-year-old lieutenant commanding a six-man team of Nav

Students of America's special arrangement with Providence might find it useful to com pare the punishment of Calley with that of McVeigh. Two terrorists, American born an trained, encouraged to regard the murder of civilians as a proper military objective. But Cal ley killed foreigners (102 Vietnamese peasants at My Lai in March 1968); he served thre years of confinement to barracks at Fort Benning, Georgia. McVeigh, a veteran of the Gul War, killed Americans (168 citizens in Oklahoma City in April 1995); he was portraye by the news media as an incarnation of the devil, and the production costs of his trial an execution (i.e., the exorcism) amounted to $50 million.

EALs, Kerrey, in the Mekong Delta in February 1969, had led a raid on e hamlet of Thanh Phong that resulted in the killing of thirteen un- ned women and children. The after-action report didn't identify the ad as noncombatants, and Kerrey received a Bronze Star for an exploit emed heroic. There the matter rested for nearly thirty years, until a *ewsweek* reporter, Gregory Vistica, came across some old military cords, talked to the other members of the SEAL team, and approached rrey with the request for a clarification. When the story eventually ap- ared in print it was told in the voice of a consoling therapist rather than at of a reproving journalist. It wasn't that Vistica failed to state the cts—no enemy soldiers in the village, the peasants shot down like rab- ts—but he weighted the sentiment in favor of Kerrey's torment, Kerrey's guish, Kerrey tempted by the thought of suicide. Both in the magazine ticle and in the flurry of press interviews subsequent to its publication, e interest centered on the quality of Kerrey's remorse, the dead Viet- mese reduced to stage props backing up the soliloquies on the theme of nocence regained:

"Now I can talk about it. It feels better already."
"I have chosen to talk about it because it helps me to heal."
"It's the shame. You can never . . . get away from it. It darkens your day."

Kerrey's serial acts of contrition evoked nods of warm and welcoming thos almost everywhere in the media. Except for a few churlish remarks *The Nation* and *The New Republic* (remarks to the effect that a war crime any other name was still a war crime), the preservers of a nation's con- ience were quick to recognize Kerrey as a victim of circumstance. A an-limbed American youth sent on a terrorist errand in the dead of ght and the fog of war. What else was a fellow to do? His commanding ficer insisted on body counts and the collection of yellow ears. Surely errey had suffered enough. Three weeks after the incident at Thanh ong he had lost part of his right leg in the action at Cam Ranh Bay for hich he received the Medal of Honor. Because a war hero cannot be- me a war criminal, the moral authorities on both the old left and the w right voted for acquittal, and the court of public opinion needed no ore than a few days to find that the fault was in the war, not the warrior.

"That he felt remorse, that he sacrificed even more for his country . . . is enough for his salvation, and a harder task than most can imagine. That's a war hero, folks, a sinner redeemed by his sacrifice for a cause greater than his self-interest. That's Bob Kerrey, my friend and hero."—The judgment of Sen- ator John McCain, handed down in an editorial in the *Arizona Republic*

"It was dark, very dark."—David Halberstam, defending Kerrey's honor be- fore an audience of New York intellectuals in Greenwich Village

"It is hard for most of us to imagine the horrors of war. War is Hell. Trau- matic events take place and their terrible effects may last a lifetime. We should all recognize the agony that Bob is going through and continues to deal with."—Statement from the Trustees of The New School University

"For our country to blame the warrior instead of the war is among the worst and, regrettably, most frequent mistakes we, as a country, can make."—Joint press release issued by Senators Max Cleland (D., Ga.), Chuck Hagel (R., Nebr.), and John Kerry (D., Mass.), all of them veterans of the Vietnam War

"To know or not to know? That is the political question."—Jim Hoagland, columnist in the *Washington Post*

Hoagland didn't volunteer an answer, probably because his question was so a moral one, and when engaged in the ritual purification of the Amer- an soul it is always better to know as little as possible. The soft focus of lurred emotion is preferable to the unflattering clarities of thought or a istracting clutter of facts. George Bush Sr. reduced the operative principle

INTEREST CENTERED ON KERREY'S REMORSE, THE DEAD VIETNAMESE REDUCED TO STAGE PROPS BACKING UP SOLILOQUIES ON THE THEME OF INNOCENCE REGAINED

IN THE EXCHANGE OF SNAPPY [illegible] CIRCUIT, THE THEORY OF AMERICAN EMPIRE BECOMES A [illegible]

to its simplest formulation when he was campaigning for the presidency [illegible] the summer of 1988. The U.S.S. *Vincennes*, an Aegis missile cruiser sta[illegible]tioned in the Persian Gulf, shot down an Iranian airliner on July 3, unde[illegible] the mistaken impression that it was firing at a warplane. The error in judg[illegible]ment killed 290 civilian passengers en route to Dubai. Asked for a com[illegible]ment at a campaign stop in Washington, the candidate said, "I will neve[illegible] apologize for the United States. I don't care what the facts are."[1]

Most of the exonerations of Kerrey also insisted on the point that he couldn't be fairly judged by anybody who hadn't done time in the free fire zones of the Vietnamese hell. If you hadn't been there, you didn't know, and if you didn't know, you couldn't pass judgment. The syllogism offered the further advantage of reaffirming America's lack of responsibility for the whole of the Vietnam War. Some people had been there with Kerrey in the Mekong Delta; other people had been there with the generals in the Pentagon or with Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon in the White House, but nobody except God had been everywhere, and so, when you really got around to thinking about it, the war was God's fault. The bombing of Cambodia was a natural disaster, which was too bad for the Cambodians, but one of those things like an African genocide or an earthquake in Honduras that couldn't be helped.

The same cloud of incense and unknowing that descended on Kerrey's Bronze Star blots out the hope of public debate about what kind of country we think we have become. The media don't grant much of a hearing to bystanders who question the triumph of the Pax Americana, and on most days of any week it's hard to open a newspaper or read a policy journal without submitting to a siege of imperial rhetoric. Thus, in the summer issue of *The National Interest*, none other than Henry Kissinger, filling in the basso continuo to Krauthammer's trumpet tune: "So long as the post–Cold War generation of national leaders is embarrassed to elaborate an unapologetic concept of enlightened national interest, it will achieve progressive paralysis, not moral elevation." Or again, in the same issue of *The National Interest*, Francis Fukuyama, former State Department official and author of *The End of History*: "A country that makes human rights a significant element of its foreign policy tends toward ineffectual moralizing at best, and unconstrained violence in pursuit of moral aims at worst."[2]

Transposed into the exchange of snappy sound bites on the Washington talk-show circuit, the theory of American empire becomes a complacent certainty. The pundits in residence compare notes with the visiting experts and find themselves in fond agreement on the great fact of America's colossal preeminence in the world—the size of its economy and the richness of its markets, the speed of its computers, the wonder of its

[illegible] *Sin is committed by men, so [illegible] it demeaning to make apologies. When an American [illegible] submarine rammed and sank a Japanese fishing trawler near Honolulu last February, it [illegible] stunning news [illegible] the passengers [illegible] aboard. Richard Cohen, a columnist for the Washing[illegible] States Navy. Reminding his readers that the accident occurred within sight of Pearl Har[illegible]*

same pass as absurd. But we are the same guys who have provided Japan with a security u[illegible]

[illegible] Kissinger's policies in Asia and Latin America, the phrase [illegible]

Kurdistan, but then again, maybe he's thinking [illegible] himself as an equestrian statue on the White

v·apons, the strength of its armies. Add to the sum of the superlatives the v·t reach and sway of America's "soft power" (the T-shirts and the action r vies, the cheeseburgers and the popular songs) and what we are talking a:out—as George just said, and as even Sam and Cokie will admit—is an e·pire on which—we might as well be blunt about it—the sun never sets. A present nod and chuckle, and the conversation proceeds to the good r·s about the blessings that America bestows on the less fortunate r·t·s of the earth. We guarantee the freedom of the seas, send poll watch·· to apprentice democracies arranging their first elections, provide the ·nucopia of goods (public and private) that sets the global standard for t· label "decent standard of living." Why shouldn't we do as we please? Y·, we consume 26 percent of the world's energy supply and contribute 2 percent of the poisons to the world's atmosphere. So what? We're do· the world a favor, for crying out loud; don't make *us* sorry.

On mornings when news is scarce Caesar's heirs take up the old Roman ·estions about administering provinces and dispensing justice—how ·ght we to employ our ascendancy ("unrivaled by e·n the greatest empires of the past") to quiet the ·wd noise in the world's dingier and more danger· streets. The program always ends before anybody ·nes up with a coherent idea, and as the credits r· across the pictures of the guests congratulating ·· another on the subtlety of their analysis, I some· t·es wonder about their grasp of history and their k·owledge of geography. In what time and place do t·y imagine themselves temporarily on leave from Virgil's Rome? How and where do they intend to re·uit the troops, and what do they think would be· ·me of America's peace and prosperity if we were t· replace the story of our God-given innocence w·h the cynical apologetics of forthright empire?

Unlike their overlords in Washington, the ·merican people never have been infected with t·e virus of imperial ambition; nor have we ac·ired an exalted theory of the state that might al·· us to govern subject peoples with a firm hand ·d an easy conscience. The military academy at ·est Point was established in 1802 as an engineer·· g school because the army was expected to build ·ds and bridges rather than to fight foreign wars. ·he conquest of the trans-Mississippi West was ac·mplished not by the march of legions but by nomadic bands crossing a s·cession of frontiers in the loose formation of civilian settlement. The ·neers killed anything and everything that stood in the path of ·gress—bears and passenger pigeons as well as Indians and buffaloes—b· they seldom did so as a matter of public policy.

The imperial pretensions briefly attendant upon the Spanish-American ·ar consisted mostly of loud speeches. At the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, ·oodrow Wilson gave nobody the impression that the United States wished t· rule the world. The Allied victories in the Second World War presented t·e United States with the semblance of an empire in a world largely reduced t· ruins. If in 1941 the American presence outside the Western Hemisphere ·nsisted of only a few islands in the Pacific, by 1945 it circled the earth, and ·hastily mustered regiment of American proconsuls inherited the British oil ·ncessions in Persia and found themselves supplying arms to Greece and grain t· India, posting garrisons on the Danube and the Rhine.

But even during the years of supreme triumph the nearest that most ·mericans could come to an imperial habit of mind was the tone of voice ·· which they asked the question—of French waiters and German ·hores—"How much does that cost in real money?" An authentically

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civilian nation had acceded reluctantly to military power, and, as early a 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower, a general familiar with the stupidit and waste of war, was saying that the detonation of a single artillery she took a year's bread out of the mouth of a starving child. The statemer was both admirable and accurate but not one that would have occurred t Napoleon. The imperial adventure in Vietnam was conceived and direct ed by Washington bureaucrats as ignorant of war as Charles Krauthamme and Condoleezza Rice, readers of Rudyard Kipling and fans of Teddy Roc sevelt who thought that an empire was as easily constructed as a movi set. The appalling failure of the production put an end to the chance c drumming up popular support for American reruns of the Pax Romana.

The absence of a citizen army prepared to fight for what it believes to b the glory of both its public and its private self obliges the Unites States t rely on increasingly expensive mercenaries. We prefer, in the old Roma phrase, "the shadow to the sun"—i.e., the luxury of sitting under silk canopie on the shaded side of the Colosseum to applaud the entertainment on th bright and sometimes painted sand. We sponsor poorer but more ferociou allies to fight proxy wars in Africa and the Middle East as well as in Asia an the Balkans, and the champions of democracy we buy at the depressed price paid for child labor in Chinese textile mills and Mexican strawberry fields

America hasn't fought a war in nearly thirty years, not since our chastene helicopters lifted off the roof of the embassy in Saigon in April 1975, and don't know why anybody would think we possess either a liking or a taler for the enterprise.[4] It's true that we maintain an army of our own—none bet ter dressed or more expensively equipped—but it is an army made for show a Potemkin village of an army meant to astonish Belgian bankers and fright en Arab terrorists. Our military forces are in the communications busines they send messages, they don't wage wars. The staff officers at the Pentago know how to stage fireworks displays over Belgrade and Baghdad, how to sim ulate combat (aerial, naval, and ground) on state-of-the-art computer screen where to parade the tanks on national holidays, how to deploy aircraft car riers as visual aids in the sales promotions for "the world's only superpower. All essential projects, of course, and undoubtedly worth the expenditure c $310 billion a year, but not to be confused with the Normandy landings c any other expression of overt hostility in which American soldiers run th risk of being killed. The government is very clear on the point. We don't sen our own troops into what the Pentagon judges to be "non-permissive envi ronments." No sir, not in this man's army, not when a worried mother in Ohi might complain to her congressman, or when a wounded sergeant might te a scary story to Dan Rather or Diane Sawyer.

It is the wish to remain blameless that forces up the price of the equipment The heirs to a great military estate can afford to hire servants (some of ther human, most of them electronic) to do the killing. Money in sufficien quantity washes out the stains of cruelty and greed, transports its proprietor to always higher altitudes of snow-white innocence. If the Air Force can dro bombs from 30,000 feet, preferably through a veil of fluffy white clouds, w can imagine ourselves making a war movie or playing a harmless vide game. As previously noted, the work of ritual purification is best done whe one knows as little as possible about who is doing what to whom. The pro cedure is better suited to the selling of Internet stocks and soft pornograph than to the governing of empires.

[illegible] a fishing boat and its crew, wo ted shooting down of an Iranian airliner, much less question the ability of a Marin Corps EA-6B to destroy 20 people on an Italian ski lift, but what was billed as the Per sian Gulf War would have been more accurately described as a Pentagon trade sho with live ammunition. Against a pitiably weak enemy—half-starved recruits, only to glad to give up their weapons for a cup of ramwater—victory was a foregone conclusion The lack of opposition allowed us to slaughter an unknown number of Iraqis—mayb 30,000, maybe 100,000, who knows how many of them civilian—in return for 14 Americans dead in action, 35 of them killed by "friendly fire."

STICK MAN

By Robert Coover



The Stick Man is gazing out upon the horizon. Wistfully perhaps, it's hard to be certain. Even he is not sure what he is feeling or ought to be feeling. The horizon is a mere line, but as always he fills it in with a landscape of his imagination. He does this simply by announcing it: e.g., the Stick Man is standing in the Garden of Paradise. And, with that, so he is. This is usually rewarding and satisfies him. He lives a rich and complex life and is rarely not satisfied. Today, however, the Garden of Paradise seems a bit tatty. Trampled. Gone to seed.

Perhaps he has been too long inactive. Standing limbs akimbo in the same place inventing landscapes. Straightening up from time to time when pleased or displeased with his mental transformations of the horizon line, otherwise motionless. So he puts himself through some exercises. He lifts his stick hands above his head. He bends over and touches the ends of his stick feet. He squats. He sits. He lies down. That's better. He lies there for a while on the featureless plain, inventing activities appropriate to this position. The Stick Man meditates on the ontology of being. The Stick Man digests. The Stick Man gazes at the stars (it is night now). The Stick Man watches the clouds roll by, changing their shapes (it is day). The Stick Man waits in vain for a revelation to descend. The Stick Man wonders if he can get up again. The Stick Man attempts a sit-up. Abandons it. The Stick Man rests.

It is in the prone position that he has his best ideas, and his idea now is to make love to the Stick Woman. He often does this when he's feeling a bit low or his imagination goes flat. To have the idea is to bring her to his side. She is identical to him in every way—the same empty circle for a head, the same straight spine, crossed by a shoulder bar and a hip bar at the base, with the four trisected limbs hanging off the bar ends—except that she has a notch in the bottom of the hip bar where he has a tab, which is something like a comma except when making love. Even then, actually. A thing of naught. The Stick Woman calls it his tendril. Always hopeful. When their sticks are heaped together, they make a pretty picture, as of secret hieroglyphs.

After making love, he does feel better and he thanks the Stick Woman for it, but his creative appetite remains unaroused. The Stick Man reinvents the universe, he announces. But in fact he continues to lie there in the inert postcoital position. Perhaps he should visit the human world again. The Stick Woman re-

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minds him that in the past these visits have not been very successful. That's right, he had forgotten. Or, rather, he had not forgotten, but he had not wanted to remember. No, he tells the Stick Woman, they have not, but they give me fresh ideas. Help me get up.

The horizon line has vanished, and all visible space in all possible directions is filled with human activity. The Stick Man is standing in the middle of it, more or less erect, his limbs slightly akimbo: he wants to appear relaxed. But he is not relaxed and anyone can see that. He looks desperately out of place and all too aware that he looks out of place. These humans would look out of place in his stick world, too, he knows that, but they are not in his world, nor are they likely to go there; he is in their world. Where he is unwanted. He remembers now that the last time he was here they tried to dismantle him and use his head for a manhole cover. People are uncomfortable around someone without facial features of any kind. Not to mention someone without clothing, however simple and innocent may be his poor figure.



On this occasion, a crowd gathers around him, pointing and staring. They do not seem hostile. Or merely hostile. They seem prepared to give him a chance. But a chance at what? Perhaps they think he is a street performer. In order to try to please them, he does a little dance. It is a very elaborate dance, as he thinks of it, balletic and energetic (e.g., the Stick Man attempts a flying pas de chat), but to the humans it probably appears that he is standing still. At most, twitching slightly. They grow restless. Someone speaks of building a bonfire, and cigarette lighters are produced. Humans are a hard lot. The Stick Man is standing in the Garden of Paradise, he announces resolutely; it worked before, more or less, but it doesn't work now. He's in the wrong world. And it's closing in on him. The Stick Man runs like a bat out of hell, he announces, but that doesn't work either. His knees bend slightly. More in dismay probably than in flight.

Just when all seems lost, a Cartoon Man flies in from overhead and the humans fall back. Leave him alone, you racist assholes, the Cartoon Man shouts, or prepare to die! He looks rather out of place, too, with his bright colored bodysuit and sketchy features, and he seems anything but threatening, even somewhat undersized, they could probably tear him apart, but they do as they are told. Maybe it's the surprise factor. Or maybe it's the intimidating way the Cartoon Man speaks, as if in capitals and bold type like a billboard. It's okay now, he says to the Stick Man, lowering his booming voice. Let's go throw back a snort.

In the bar, they are drinking and telling each other their life stories. The Cartoon Man is soaking up glass after glass of whiskey, with beer chasers. I can't get enough of this swill, he says, pouring another glassful down his cartoon gullet. Not that it does much for me, he adds with a belch so powerful it makes the bottles tinkle on the shelves behind the bar. I seem to have a hard time getting a buzz on, but when I do, boy, watch out! The Stick Man is not actually having a drink in human terms, because they won't serve him. The Cartoon Man made a loud fuss about this, springing up and down so he could see over the bar, banging his fist on it as he leapt and speaking in huge jagged capitals, but the Stick Man told him not to bother, he prefers having a drink his own Stick Man way. To demonstrate this, he bends one arm at the elbow, holds his stick hand near his tipped "O" of a head, and announces: the Stick Man tastes a glass of wine. He makes a scuffing noise, which might be the sound of him sniffing or that of his knees brushing together. Hmm, he says. Complex bouquet of black currant, green olive, and cedarwood, faintly herbaceous, reminiscent of bell peppers. Promising. He tips his head back; the movement is almost imperceptible. Harmonious flavors, deep and long-lasting, with a noble balance of fruit, alcohol, tannin, and acid. It's a classic from the best vintage of the decade. Beautiful. And it's opening up nicely. I think I'll have another. And he does.

That's pretty good, says the Cartoon Man. Me, I couldn't tell a bell pepper from a stale armpit. We're not very big on taste and smell in the cartoon world. Mostly we're into low comedy and killing people. A lot of people. Fighting evil, man, it's fucking endless. He shakes his cartoon head sadly, his eyes and nose seeming to move about on his face as he does so, and throws down another tumbler of whiskey. The Stick Man thinks about evil. Perhaps for the first time. He realizes it has caused him to bend over slightly as if he has taken up a sack of potatoes. But tell me, Stick Man, what brings you to this shapeless shithole? These humans'll snuff you, you know. You're a fucking insult to their world.

I come to watch them, and when I see them do something interesting, I remember it and take it back to my stick world and do it there. In truth, I can't imagine my own world except in relation to theirs, though of course mine's superior. To walk on water or fall off a building is not the same in my world as it is here. There's so little in my world, there's room for

erything, all I have to do is think of it, but heirs is so cluttered and congested, and, well, obvious. In your face, as they like to say. If ou have one, that is.

Yeah, I know what you mean, Stick Man, his bloated meat farm dumps a streamlined avy action guy like me straight into shore ode. Five minutes and out come the Z's. A re to the core, show me the door. Don't ow why they love it so. Just goddamn stupid, guess. It's not like where I come from. We got e best of their world in ours, all the sex and olence, tears and laughter, but speeded up ith none of the dull sweaty bits. The Stick an disagrees with this, the cartoon world just akes the obvious more obvious, painting it, as e might say, in primary colors, but out of poteness does not say so. He tilts his shoulder r in sympathy, though perhaps a little too r. The Stick Man expresses empathy should erhaps read: the Stick Man expresses inebriaon. Shouldn't have had that second one. No olerance. Delicious, though.

Listen, come on back with me to my strip, tick Man. We'll go on a toot, tear up the cking frame. I got a set of wheels you won't elieve. We'll pick up some hot dames. I know couple of doozies who'll blow your pants off. oosely speaking, I mean.

Thanks. But I've been there. I get treated as a andicapped person. Or else I'm just laughed at.

I know, it's that kind of place, they'll laugh t anything, they can't help themselves. But, ey, this time you'll be with me, man. I'm a suerhero, they don't mess with me. I catch anyne even smirking, he's a dead man. Or oman. I'm evenhanded on that score. Whadaya say?

It's very kind. But, well, I have a doozy back the stick world, and I miss her. Maybe that's hat he's expressing in his drunken tilt: the tick Man remembers his absent lover. The tilt eepens. But you could come with me to the ick world.

Nah. Too square for me. So goddamn flat d colorless. Whaddaya got? A straight line d a few sticks to play with. No wonder you ome slumming here. Mix it up with a little ush and shove, get your feet in the paint, pick p the tempo for a change. Must be a drag to ang out in all that emptiness for long.

No. Not for stick people. It's exciting, really. 's got everything. For it's always just what we magine it to be.

Yeah? Listen, tell me, do you really get your cks off with your little doozy, Stick Man, or o you just imagine that too?

Well. I guess in my world, it's sort of the me thing.

That's what I thought, says the Cartoon Man, throwing down another tumblerful. I'll stick with what I got. I don't want to have to think it up. I love to get hit by surprises. Even bad ones. Especially bad ones. I love the danger, the speed, the contact, the whole wild toot and scramble. Biff! Boff! He drives his free fist into the bar. I need adversaries!

As if on cue, a group of humans come in, shoulders squared, looking threatening. There he is! The Stick Man! The Cartoon Man tosses his empty glass over the bar, causing an explosive crash that makes the humans stagger back a step, and prepares to defend them both. They'll never take us alive, Stick Man!

No, wait, says one of the humans. We are here on a peaceful diplomatic mission.

Bullshit! Take another step, you treacherous scumbags, and I'll peaceful mission your ass! His head's down and his legs are churning. He seems about to fly forward and head-butt them all. Don't trust those shifty meatsacks, Stick Man! You know what they're like! Let's kill them!

Tell him to calm down, Stick Man. And to stop using such appalling language. We are here to speak about large and serious matters.

And we do quite a lot of killing in the human world, too, Cartoon Man, so you better cool it!

The Stick Man assumes a posture of conciliation, something he learned on previous visits to the human world. We should hear what they have to say, he says, but be prepared. Also something learned. Not sure what it means, but it's effective.

Stick Man, we realize that—excuse me, but am I looking at your face or—? never mind, I shouldn't have asked—we realize that, as a people, we have not always received you here with the dignity and respect properly due you and, well, your kind. But now, on behalf of the entire human world, or at least that part of it which is empowered to establish committees such as ours, we are calling upon you henceforth to represent officially for us the human condition, as we understand it. We feel somehow you can encapsulate it in economical ways difficult to achieve for those of us with a, what can one say, a more complex personal architecture.



The Stick Man's posture of conciliation shifts slightly to express the faintest hesitation in the face of such an unexpected honor and, at the same time, the anxiety aroused by its implicit obligations, which may include having to

remain in the human world, and he knows that he's already, in exhibiting this struggle with ambivalence, exercising his new office.

We have prepared a stage, Stick Man, that captures the essence of your world, which is to say, imitates it exactly, for you have nothing but essence there. We will provide the text each day; you will, so to speak, illustrate it.

I have always made my own announcements, he says, letting his turned-out elbows suggest modesty and apology.

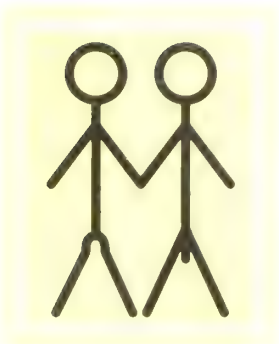
We know that, but that's in the stick world. This is the human world. We do things differently here.

We hope you'll accept our offer, Stick Man. And anyway you have no alternative. We always get what we want.

You going along with this horseshit? the Cartoon Man asks at his elbow.

It appears I have no choice.

I could kill them all if you want me to. Wham! Ker-splat!



No. I'll do as they ask. It should be fun. He expresses this with a lighthearted disposition of his limbs and tilt of his head, though he recognizes (and probably reveals this to a careful observer) that a certain dissimulating artifice has crept into his demeanor, for he does not feel at all lighthearted, and he wonders if he has caught some baneful human infection. The Stick Woman was probably right. He shouldn't have come here.

Well then, I'm popping back to the strip to get in a few frames of the old down-and-dirty. Pow! Whop! Blam! I can use a workout. But if you need me, pal, just blow your horn.

Wait a minute, says the bartender. Who's paying for all this broken glass?

Do not complain, says the leader of the humans. History has been made in here today. By next week, this will be a famous tourist attraction. You can sell the broken glass as souvenirs. In fact, you'd be doing yourself a favor to smash a few more things.

When the Stick Man takes the oath of office on his little stage, he bends one of his stick arms at the elbow and raises his stick hand. It is the wrong arm, the left one, but no one objects, given the solemnity of the occasion. There are vast multitudes gathered to witness this oath and his premier performance, which can begin only after elaborate ceremonies and a great many lengthy orations of the sort that humans seem to require. Perhaps because their other means of expression are so limited and s occluded by their clumsy fragile integument Or perhaps because they can never say on thing alone or directly, but must always, as if b nature, flesh out the bare bones of their simpl little thoughts. He warms up for his new rol by acting out the successive lines of the ora tions, but he is all too aware of what his pos ture really expresses: the Stick Man is bored t tears. Commingled with: the Stick Man i homesick. He hopes that no one perceives this but that they all assume instead that he is re sponding dutifully to the text provided by th committee for the occasion: the Stick Man re ceives with a mixture of pride and humility th adulation of the masses.

They do seem to have warmed to him. Th speeches are flattering and enthusiastically ap plauded, and his every gesture brings on wil cheering. Here you see him in all his such ness, in all his plenitude! declares one speak er, and everyone claps and huzzahs. His mor or less rectilinear, geniculate, and symmetrica frame is utterly without habiliment, and yet i cannot be said the Stick Man is standing her before us in the buff, for he has no buff either Whistles and applause. He has no pelt or epi dermis, no casing, sheath, or rind, no fell, fu leather, fleece, husk, or pericarp! No flesh Cheers and whoops of friendly laughter Which is why his expression of our existentia situation is so vivid! So transparent! H shows us the naked truth! He continues to re ceive the feverish adulation of the masses. H has nothing extraneous! Not even a face! Jus a head that says "O!" A head wide open to al experience! What is his age? He can be—an is—a baby, child, adult, and ancient, all a once, or in any order as he pleases! Most per sons are less within than they seem on th surface, the Stick Man is more! Watch hin now as he ponders infinity! As he demon strates that it is better to sit still than to ris and fall! As he counts his blessings! As he de cries disorder! As he admires the perfect beau ty of the human world!

And so, at the inauguration ceremony an during the weeks that follow, he does thes things and to great acclaim, not only from th crowds who gather daily before his stage bu also from the vast television audience throughout the human world, for his ever move and position are captured by the camera and shown live every hour on the news an each evening on prime time in an edited ver sion. He is, as the humans say, hot. A celebri ty. Presidents, kings, and movie stars sen their greetings and felicitations, ordinar people their gratitude and suggestions for fur ther aspects of the human condition he migh

take on, professors critical disquisitions for him to comment upon by word or gesture, human women love letters. Though he would be hard-pressed to respond to the latter in the ordinary way, even his ordinary way which is not theirs. The committee members who appointed him to this office were greatly disturbed by his tab, feeling that it marred the purity of his representations, sprouting there between his legs like an unruly twig, a kind of obscene error of punctuation, as one of them said, and they considered shaving it off, but they were a bit queasy about handling it, so they accepted the idea that it could be taped to the back of his hip bar with black electrical tape, provided the Stick Man kept it taped and out of sight at all times, though they do, being realists, permit him, as an official act, to meditate from time to time upon the mind-body paradox, to the delight, as with all else, of his fans.

The committee is well pleased with his success, and on the whole they treat him kindly and with consideration, but they turn a deaf ear to his expressed wish to return home, if only for a visit, believing that their world is so vastly superior to his, he should be grateful to be allowed to live in it and should desire no other. And so he goes on, though with increasing sorrow in his heart, performing in his Stick Man way the texts that they provide: The Stick Man demonstrates that good service is a great enchantment. The Stick Man recalls the joys of childhood. The Stick Man bears with equanimity the malice of others, while anticipating always their kindness. The Stick Man laughs at adversity. The Stick Man goes shopping. He takes up positions reflecting grand themes like good and evil, illusion and reality, money (his illustration of the ancient human proverb that a man without money is like a bow without an arrow is particularly successful), religion, politics, work, and the arts of success, but also lesser elements of the human condition like desire, knowledge, manners, the digestive processes, the fine arts, and so on, as well as certain negative aspects thought to be exemplary: The Stick Man wrestles with his guilty conscience. The Stick Man is embarrassed by his bodily parts. The Stick Man is envious of the success of others. The Stick Man is obsessed by the memory of his mother. The Stick Man is afraid of heights. The Stick Man fails to understand the meaning of the universe.

Of course, he's just acting. He is not embarrassed, envious, or afraid, and he does understand the meaning of the universe, at least in Stick Man terms. It's quite simple, though not really relevant to the human world. But he understands why they are asking him to do this. He is not illustrating their condition merely, he is also absorbing it. Sucking it up into his rectilinear and geniculate frame. The Stick Man fully recognizes that the humans hope that his taking on the human condition will free them from it. And he knows that they will be frustrated in their hope.

As happens. After he represents the human condition, it is still theirs, not his, and the crowds begin to drift away, burdened as before. The hourly news dispatches end and *The Stick Man Show* moves out of prime time into the late-night comedy and extended news hour. There are no more love letters. Many do still come to see him, especially groups on package tours sold during the height of his popularity, but the expressions of excitement and delight which had previously confronted him now give way to ones of disappointment, perplexity, and even revulsion. Which he reads, of course, as self-revulsion and -disappointment, for he is only reminding them of their own condition. The Stick Man contemplates the sadness of the human enterprise: a position he takes up on his own without informing the committee, his posture in effect imitating that of most of his audience, a posture appropriate as well to his stick condition, for he longs only to be back in his stick world again and with his Stick Woman and his tab untaped. He has often imagined her, when making love, in a shape the human world would call voluptuous, but he realizes, far from her, he loves her just as she is, her simple notched frame now dearer to him than anything in this world or any other.



The committee, for its part, works hard to revive interest in him, evidently having considerable personal investment in the success of his office, as created by them. Aware that illustrated texts of edifying moral uplift are failing to attract audiences, they impose upon him the darker aspects of the human condition: The Stick Man suffers from an inferiority complex. The Stick Man tells a lie and is empowered by it. The Stick Man shows the ill effect of trying to live on hope alone. The Stick Man feels like a worm and behaves like one. The Stick Man emits a bad odor. The Stick Man fears death.

Now he no longer suffers neglect. He suffers rejection. Hostility. The Stick Man is shunned as the bearer of ill tidings. Those who come to his performances do so only to insult him (Sick Sticks, they call him) and

throw things at him. Their enmity worries him less than the possibility that he might be acquiring the fears and complexes that he is asked to represent. If left alone, these ideas might never have occurred to him, and he is afraid that he will contaminate the stick world with them, should he ever be able to return. The Stick Man peers into an open grave, displaying a distasteful morbidity. The Stick Man lusts after a small child. The Stick Man considers poisoning his neighbor's dog. The Stick Man ridicules the human condition. The Stick Man betrays his best friend. He remains a celebrity, but in the way that serial killers are celebrities. There are protests and *The Stick Man Show* is taken off the air.



Desperate, the committee decides to untape his tab and let it, as they say in their world, all hang out. They run electric billboard advertisements of his forthcoming texts: The Stick Man exposes his private parts, heretofore concealed. The Stick Man admires his backside in the mirror. The Stick Man goes to the bathroom standing up. The Stick Man goes to the bathroom sitting down. The Stick Man wishes someone would lick his tab. He becomes fair game for the human comedians and his ratings rise, but this is not his office as originally defined. The Stick Man laments his unhappy fate: this is the position he would assume were he not obliged to assume so many others, mostly related to his tab. The Stick Man, stroking himself, thinks of his beloved. The Stick Man attempts an act of autofellatio. The Stick Man suffers from castration anxiety. He is a celebrity again, but the committee members themselves are wrangling about ends and means. The Stick Man suggests it might be time for him to return quietly to the stick world. They don't listen. It's as though he's not even there. When he timidly repeats his suggestion, they throw up a new text—the Stick Man scratches his hemorrhoids—and tell him to get to it, while they continue their deliberations.

In the end, although some of the more sober and idealistic committee members resign in disgust, the decision of those remaining (they speak vaguely of the educational aspect) is to introduce the Stick Woman into the act, and an expedition is mounted to capture her and bring her back to the human world. The Stick Man is both elated and fearful, for the Stick Woman has never been to the human world, nor ever wished to be. Far less restless than he, she has always been happy in the stick world and unhappy whenever he left it. She arrives, chained and manacled, desperately relieved to see him again but terrified by her ordeal (she resisted her captors and now has a second bow on her right arm), his worst fears realized. The Stick Man tenderly embraces his love one. As officially announced. She melts into his arms. Also. The crowds have returned. Some of the delight. The cameras. She does not see them. She sees only him. She clings to him. He was not really afraid before, but now, for her, he is.

They are encouraged to enjoy each other in the classical manner, and they do, though more in a consolatory fashion than a passionate one, for they are well aware that their trials are not concluded. After the initial surprise of this newest innovation has worn off, they are obliged to perform all the positions known in the human world, which they do, but, by unspoken agreement, they do not reveal the intimacies peculiar to their stick world. *The Stick Man Show* returns to the networks during the afternoon hours of the soap operas.

Stick-person sex is different and has a certain appeal of the sort described by the orator on the day of the Stick Man's inauguration, namely, its naked and exemplary transparency, but in the end it cannot compete in the human world with fleshy sex. Even the simple stroking of human skin—a knee, say, or a bottom, a tear-stained cheek—seems to have more appeal to humans than the Stick Man and Stick Woman attempting exotic positions like the wheelbarrow or the triple X, especially given the subdued nature of their performances. The show's ratings, at first promising, drop off again. The committee, what's left of it, feels the act has to be more extreme, there's no other way. Animals are ruled out. There are no available stick animals. Likewise, third or fourth parties. They decide on violence. Rape. Whips. Bondage. Torture. Disfigurement. Hammers and nails.

The Stick Man refuses. His imagination is vast, but hurting the Stick Woman is beyond it. They have reached a point of no return. The committee meets in emergency session. It is clear to them that the show must end. But it is still in their power to decide how it will end and what they can extract from it. They consider the possibility of destroying the Stick Woman, reducing her to a heap of broken sticks, her facial platter shattered as a mirror might be, all of her remains dumped on the stage in front of the Stick Man to see what he will do. Text: The Stick Man throws up. The Stick Man mourns his beloved. The Stick Man goes berserk. But then what would they

with the Stick Man? He'd be useless but still here. He'd probably have to be destroyed, too. So they decide to get rid of them both at the same time. A lovers' tragedy. But it makes for better television if they can create a plot around the killings and delay over a few weeks the final denouement to lure the audiences back. They find the perfect solution: let the audience kill them.

First, they must begin a rumor campaign against them. They must be utterly reviled. Later, it will be seen that they were only misunderstood, but only after they no longer exist. Then it will be a sad story. Songs will be written and so on. There will be edited reruns. For now, by way of letters to the editor, graffiti, anonymous advertisements, phone calls pretending to be from poll takers, dirty jokes, leaked "disclosures," they are decried as deserters, traitors, perverts, racketeers, revolutionary anarchists, scofflaws, thieves, sex fiends, mercenaries, atheists, dangerous aliens. The crowds begin to gather once more. They are increasingly hostile. Weapons appear. Guns and knives are temptingly displayed in shop windows. The gathered multitudes shout out positions the Stick Man and Stick Woman are to take, but they have stopped performing and simply cling to each other. It is not clear whether their circle heads are looking out upon the crowd or at each other. Either way, they make a good target. Down on your knees! the mob shouts. Eat shit, Stick Man! Say your prayers! It is happening faster than the committee had expected, but it is too dangerous to try to do anything about it. They watch the proceedings from the safety of a television studio. It becomes apparent to them that many in the crowd must have hankered to do this since the day of the Stick Man's inauguration. They have not aroused them so much as released them, a lesson to be learned. Thus, they tell themselves they are not responsible for what happens next.

What happens next, however, could not have been anticipated. The Cartoon Man swoops down, snatches up the Stick Man and Stick Woman, and flies them back to their stick world. They are shot at as they lift away, but without consequence; tragedies only happen in the human world, and they are soon out of it. How did you know we were in trouble? I saw it on television. In the cartoon world? We get the same programs. The Stick Man feels like weeping when he sees the stick world again, though he never wept before; something the humans taught him. Many things will be different now. Expressing his gratitude, he remarks that the Cartoon Man has served as a kind of miraculous deus ex machina. I'm not a fucking deus of any kind, man, replies the Cartoon Man. I'm just a superhero. It's what I do. It gives me a surge. They invite the Cartoon Man to stay for supper in the stick world, but the Cartoon Man declines, saying the place makes him itchy. I need a place I can sink my teeth into, as you might say. Let me know, though, the next time you're back in the neighborhood. Not soon, says the Stick Woman, having locked her double-elbowed arm around the Stick Man.

When the Cartoon Man has gone and the Stick Man and Stick Woman are embracing once more, tab to slot, in the old stick world way, the Stick Man sighs and says: A little while ago I decided to imagine the Garden of Paradise. Just to feel like I was home again. And I did, but it was darker than I remembered, and I saw that dangers lurked there, and I was afraid. In the past I have, whenever I wished, imagined fear, but now it's inside me without my imagining it, and I know it will never go away.

It is the darkness of the human world, says the Stick Woman. We have brought it back with us like a kind of shadow. We never had shadows before.

Yes, but I don't think that's what I'm afraid of. I've always known the human world was a sad place where lives are short and meaningless and mostly wasted, and where the fear of death drives humans to either madness or despair unless they find some means of distracting themselves, which, if it's not lethal, is a kind of benign madness. That's what they call the human comedy. In fact, it's their gentle crazed distractions that I have mostly taken pleasure in expressing here in the stick world, and this has often made it beautiful. The humans really only asked me to do what I've been doing all along, though they made me take up many aspects of their lives I had never imagined before. Some of them left me very sore at heart. And the trouble is, now that I have lived in their world, truly lived there, I don't really like it anymore. And if I don't like it, how can I find pleasure in imagining it? The darkness I saw in the Garden of Paradise was an omen of an absolute darkness setting in. And when it does, then what? That's what I'm afraid of.



The Stick Woman grips his hip bar tenderly, her round head on his shoulder bar. We need another world, she says.

Yes. But there is no other.

LOS

The computer virus is an ode to

scrutable, abstract. Interpretations of it vary starkly: read by a

works, but read by a person, it speaks, offering a glimpse into

emerged. The virus excerpted here (strictly speaking, a variant

virus," or "Love Bug," which, after its release in May of last year,

billion in damage. It has spawned many imitators — over eighty

with almost identical code, plus countless more designed on sim

alienation, the Love Bug stands unparalleled. And so, as with

any great work of literature, it is best to return to the original.

thor exists. Like their close cousins the graffiti artists, virus writ-

ers want above all else for their names to be known, and the

writer ensures that his own stands high and clear: he is Spyder

of the GRAMMERSoft hacker group in the Philippines. Spyder,

whose real name is Onel de Guzman, was then a 22-year-old

computer science student in Manila; he hails originally from

Samar Island, a poor Filipino fishing province. "I hate go to

school," De Guzman writes. Before allegedly unleashing this

worm — an act for which he was charged but never prosecuted —

he attempted, unsuccessfully, to submit it as his thesis. (His the-

sis proposal promised a program called "E-mail Password Sender

Trojan" that "cached and retrieved all lose passwords that users

can enjoy it.") The Philippines has 350,000 computer-science

students but few high-technology jobs; many of these students,

like De Guzman, turn to hacking out of underemployed ennui.

of four Philippines-based Web addresses to download a "Trojan

horse" — a program that allows hackers backdoor access to the

infected computer via the Internet. Spyder's "E-mail Password

Sender Trojan" was designed to watch the victim's Web trans-

actions and secretly e-mail back any passwords it saw, giving De

Guzman access to accounts around the world. Shortly after the

to try. What began as an attempted larceny thus became a kind

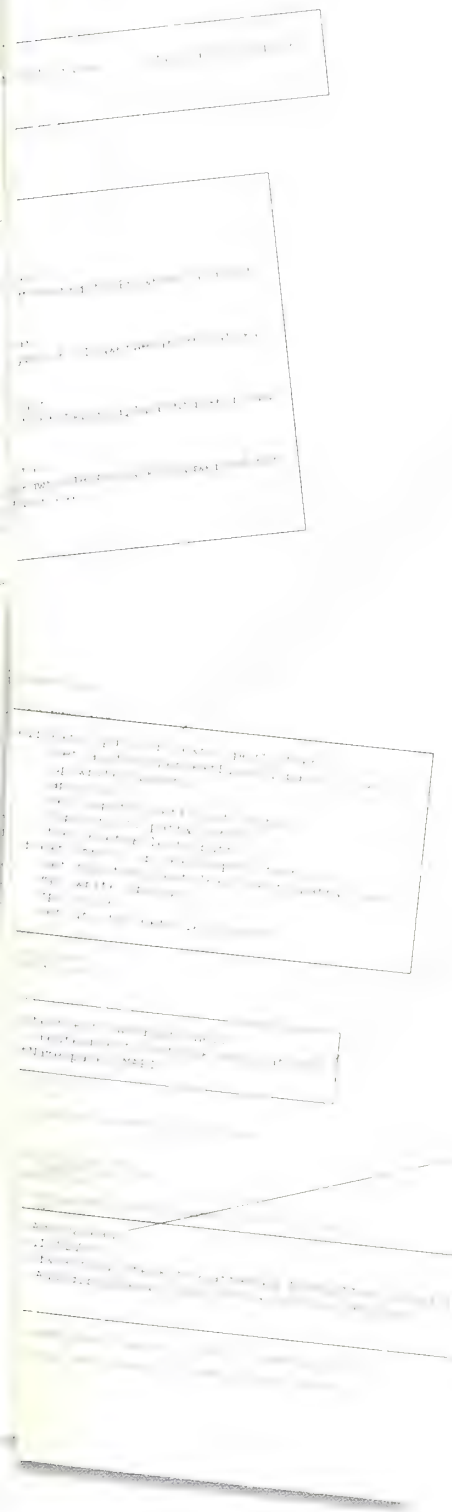
broken links, ghost sites, crossed signals, and thwarted yearnings

spyder

is the author of My Tiny Life: Crime and Passion in a

)VE

l disaffection, *by Julian Dibbell*



Porn and piracy, the Internet's Tigris and Euphrates, flow in two great streams of digital file-types: the image files (JPEGs) that issue forth from hundreds of thousands of adult-oriented websites, and the audio CD copies (MP3s) that circulate unauthorized among the millions of users of Napster and other music-trading services. In the passage indicated here, the Love Bug searches its victims' hard drives for these files and replaces them with copies of itself. If Spyder here intends a moral lesson, it is a superfluous one, as the online glut of dirty pictures and stolen tunes does nothing if not critique itself. The Internet affords us undreamed-of possibilities for transnational dialogue, and this is what we do with it: cruise for pixelated sex and rock-and-roll, stockpiling it on our hard drives against our growing realization that the Net will never be the raging party we had hoped.

The Love Bug's spread depends on the presence of a single piece of software: Outlook, Microsoft's email program, which, happily for the worm, has almost as firm a grip on the world's computers as does Microsoft Windows itself. Without true variety in our software, some argue, we will forever be upended by fast-spreading rogue programs like this one, just as nineteenth-century Irish peasants were devastated by the potato blight's sweep through their monocultural food supply. Yet despite the digital culture's endless celebrations of diversity ("Think Different," the famous slogan commands), there is a certain mindless repetition intrinsic to the Internet, where ideas and software multiply a thousandfold with one click; where the lure of wider communication drives users toward an ultimate "interoperability" and, hence, toward an ultimate uniformity. The ubiquitous Microsoft desktop is merely the blind, corporate face of this logic. The virus—a program that exists only to copy itself—is its dark shadow.

Here is the heart of the Love Bug's reproductive system and of its genius: five lines of code that create an email message with the subject line "ILOVEYOU," attach a file (the worm itself), and send it out to every name in the victim's email address book. Hackers call this "social engineering," and here it has been fine-tuned to the quiet desperation of the cubicle. What digital worker, dependent on the screen for what little human contact comes his or her way each day, could resist exploring an improbable declaration of passion from a fellow drone? The pivotal literary device of the Love Bug is a tragic irony, indeed the central irony of the Internet itself: the deeper our immersion in the high-tech fantasy of total connection—global, immediate, unceasing—the more keenly we [illegible] loneliness that haunts all human life. Like Trojans beholding a wooden horse, we perceive, in a glowing box, a gift of love; and we, too, are unprepared for the disappointments that await within.

WORKING STIFFS

The necessary parasites of capitalism

By Adam Davidson

What is a cynic? A man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing.

Oscar Wilde

With death come parasites. A tree falls, an antelope is picked off by a lion; however violent or peaceful the end, a host of creatures—fungus, termites, maggots, mushrooms, flies, worms, bacteria—invade the carcass and begin digesting it. We call this process rot, decay, putrefaction, decomposition, and choose not to look upon it; we prefer instead to bury or burn the dead. If we take comfort in the transformative nature of death, it is only in the spiritual sense. That we feed the worms that till the soil offers little relief to most people. Death is tainted, and the stain spreads to all who deal in it.

And sometimes it is easy to see why.

"A wrongful death is worth a base amount," says George Marr, holding his hand at chest level.

"But if the guy coaches Little League, that's good," Ed Quinn adds as George's hand springs up to chin height.

"He's got two little girls," George says.

"And they're cute."

"They're cute," George repeats. [illegible] His hand [illegible] chin-high.

Except for the setting—a Midtown Manhattan bar—Ed and George are doing now what they do all day: computing the value a jury would assign the deceased in a wrongful-death case and gauging how to persuade survivors to settle for less. Ed is tall and slim, tightly controlled and tense, with a softly menacing voice that's equal parts Brooklyn and Baldwin. He's drinking Merlot, slowly. George is shorter, fatter, looser. He's drinking Buds, one after the other. I'm drinking Heinekens, which they both find funny. Did I know, they ask me, that a dead man's worth is partly determined by his wife's beauty? The prettier she is, Ed explains, "the more jury appeal she has." But she shouldn't be gorgeous. "The jury goes, 'Wait a minute, wait a minute.'" "She's probably a bitch," George adds. "I didn't like her in high school."

Here's the sad truth of what they have come to tell me: In the end, life is exactly what you feared it to be—a popularity contest. As casualty adjusters, Ed and George judge people as if they were casting a Harrison Ford movie or a minivan commercial. The closer the deceased was to an idealized vision of American man- or womanhood—a white, straight, successful, outgoing, potent, attractive, middle-aged parent who tenderly cared for spouse, children, and aged parents—the greater his or her worth. Just as in high school, any deviation from the norm is punished. Only with Ed and George, conformity is paid out on a sliding scale. Jocks are worth the most, geeks a lot less, and slutty girls lower everyone's value.

George, hand above his head, continues to evaluate the man with the cute girls. "His wife's a bimbo tramp, you come down a little."

"Or he's having an affair," Ed says.

"Or he's stealing from his company," George adds, his hand now below his stomach, the man's valu halved. "You don't write it down. It' intuitive, based on experience."

"A good adjuster is a smart guy wh knows the street, the law, medicine, ar chitecture," Ed says. "You're talkin about a jack-of-all-trades. He can jus as easily go into a lawyer's office an the worst neighborhood in the city You don't have the luxury of a gu and a badge. People don't have to tal to you. A good adjuster gets people t talk because he's good at what h does."

I ask them to evaluate my worth and they tell me that outdoorsy peopl are worth more than people like me who stay home and read. "People have no sympathy for somebody who sit alone on his couch, drinks beer, eat food, and is a load," Ed says.

"That's why nobody likes me," say George. "It's how sympathetic you are People go, 'He *rock climbed*,' you know 'This guy *enjoyed life*. He was out there *doing things*.' You cherish life more i you are interacting with it."

These value judgments surround u like air, and, like air, at death they be come integral in the process of break ing someone down. Adjusters like Ed and George are just the biological agents that speed degradation along. Ed works freelance for several companies including the one at which George is now a vice president, First Capital Risk Services. Insurance companies spend some $107.5 billion each year in casualty verdicts and settlements, which is equivalent to 1.2 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product. Most wrongful death cases—medical malpractice product liability, car wrecks, airplane

Adam Davidson is a frequent contributor to [illegible] Marketplace.

shes—eventually settle out of court. both sides can go to a jury if they nk they'll get a better outcome. Therefore juries—which hear three es out of a hundred—determine the lue in the other ninety-seven.

Ed explains: "What is a fifty-nine-ar-old executive rth in the Bronx? nay not know. I'll to a jury award, a se that's been liti-ed. Then we know at with this kind of se, this kind of per-n, he's worth $2 llion."

Theirs is hardly an ict science,' for ju-s, too, start with the lculable—medical d funeral expenses; w much the person vided for his wife, ildren, parents—d then add or sub-ict for intangibles.

"Remember that se a couple of years o, girl going to a edding?" Ed asks eorge. "The limou-ne makes a turn and hit broadside by a y in one of these uped-up cars. Killed e bride, killed the oom, the best man. an, girl's going to her wedding. What e hell is that worth? People are sed. A mother giving birth dies on e operating table. Shit. That's worth ot of money."

"Know what the worst are?" George ks. "Burns."

Ed sucks air through his teeth. "Big oney. Big money."

"You want them dead quick," eorge says. "No pain and suffering. oom. It's very cynical." He laughs.

In fact, because of the premium put testimony regarding pain and suf-



fering, juries tend to award generously for severe injuries but undervalue deaths. When claimants don't get the amount they appear to deserve in a settlement, it could be either because the defendant had a small insurance policy or because the adjuster found out something unsavory about the victim.

"Suppose the guy was a dirtbag," Ed says. "I find out the guy was a criminal or wife abuser. It knocks down the value."

"You had that woman who was HIV-positive and is running to the methadone clinic and gets hit by a bus," George recalls helpfully.

"Yeah, well, see, we were in a better position to discuss settlement," Ed says.

They may sound cold, but Ed and George see themselves as the good guys. Everyone tries to rip off insurance companies, they say, which is why insurance costs so much and why nobody respects our courts anymore. Adjusters help keep settlements down and put reason back into the system.

But that doesn't mean anyone is grateful.

"The insured hates you, you're giving away his money," George says. "Claimants don't like you, you're not giving enough money. Your own company doesn't like you because you're paying too much money. Attorneys don't like you because you're controlling the money."

"You're at the sorry end of our business," Ed says. "Twenty-five years ago there was an esprit de corps. Adjusters were . . ."

"They were social misfits and outcasts," George says.

"The industry was full of extremely colorful people who had certain problems," Ed continues. "They never achieved what they should have. They could discuss medicine like doctors, law like lawyers." Adjusters used to call their own shots, settle cases their own way, he adds. Nowadays, every adjuster has a vice president giving him quarterly goals based on some software projection.

He smiles as he recalls the adjuster who trained him: "A guy in his sixties. Bow tie. He looked like Howdy Doody. I'm embarrassed to be in the same car with him. He would go into the bathroom, look in the mirror, comb his hair, and say to himself, 'John, don't ever change, Mr. America.'" Ed mimics, rolling his hands over his hair before pointing both forefingers cowboy-gun style. "Crazy, but he was a great adjuster. He made great settlements."

Although insurance adjusters are an integral part of violent death, we do our best to pretend they don't exist. They act much like private detectives but are rarely portrayed in movies. What they do makes us uncomfortable, so we treat them like an untouchable caste. Even adjusters are uneasy discussing their work. Ed and George loved to detail gruesome accidents, but

Which is just how insurance companies like it. As Andrew Tobias notes in The Invisible Bankers, *the insurance industry is "among the most secretive in the world, refusing to release the most basic statistics, hid to few regulations, and hiding predatory lending schemes behind mind-numbing jargon and a sea of small type."*

when I asked about the routine valuation of cases involving [illegible] were met with disdain. Corporate America doesn't want employees to contemplate the deeper truth [illegible] prevents them from automatically and efficiently [illegible] and for adjusters, the perils of soul-searching are particularly clear. The longer they ponder the value of a mother's love or the price of loneliness, the more money they'll give away. But it isn't only adjusters who cultivate detachment. We all do. When someone dies at the hands of our industrialized society, all of us contemplate how many lives we are willing to lose for bigger cars, more planes, tastier coffee, and how we want the marketplace to measure our souls. But for the economy to chug merrily along, someone has to convert death into cash so that corporations can move past the speed bumps caused by unexpected fatalities. When adjusters take on that task, they also take on our contempt for it.

I first confronted the implications of placing a dollar value on human life four years ago when I was hired to help write a course for mid-level adjusters graduating from the pricing of dented fenders and sprained wrists to the big league: the valuing of paraplegics and the dead. For several weeks I sat in a cramped conference room with five senior adjusters: big men who cursed and competed to tell tales about bizarre or violent deaths.

During these "roundtables," one adjuster would read a case history out loud—where the accident occurred, who seemed at fault, how the victim [illegible] and then the instructor wrote on an oversized pad of paper on an easel and totaled up the value. One column was devoted to "Pain and Suffering," or, in adjuster shorthand, "P+S." Emotional losses were gleaned from a stack of depositions by the deceased's relations. If a mother said her son visited every week, that was worth a few hundred thousand. For spouses willing to testify, the loss of good, frequent sex could add $250,000 or more to a claim.

Some depositions were extremely moving, but just as often they were a compilation of stock phrases such as "my mother would always walk barefoot on the beach" or "my husband loved watching sunsets." And when a case does go to trial, the plaintiff's side often introduces videos with sappy music and heartbreaking narration designed to whip the jury into a frenzy of sentimental generosity.

Of course, for every cloying plaintiff cliché, adjusters respond with a gross caricature of their own. In love? We have testimony that the deceased and his wife fought all the time. Good father? The kids' teachers say he never *once* picked them up from school. Since a person's primary value is derived from earnings—actual and potential—and the number of dependents, adjusters are particularly brutal when considering the dead person's prospects, hiring economists to say he never would have amounted to much anyway.

Sitting there among the empty coffee cups, stale pastries, and stacks of paper, I found myself rooting for the dead, wishing that they had died more painfully and left more loved ones behind. The worse the death, the more money they'd bring. It was hard not to take the valuations personally. I hated that my relationship with my girlfriend has no dollar value while any loveless marriage is worth at least a few hundred thousand, that reading and writing are worth nothing. Why should my value be determined by criteria I don't agree with? Do I need to spend my weekend doing something I don't like—mountain climbing, praying—just to prove I am worth something?

Of course, all of us would like to consider ourselves unique, even rare. Adjusters, however, are only interested in the rack rate of human life. In the hopes that I could reasonably assess my own worth, I plowed through the archives of the *Cook County Jury Verdict Reporter*, examining forty recent cases of men who had died between the ages of twenty and thirty-five. The reports were terse: a few lines about the plaintiff and the defendant, t lawyers involved, and, in bold ty the amount of the verdict or sett ment. I didn't find any answers, o more questions. Why was one twen six-year-old man, electrocuted o work site, worth $5 million while a other, also twenty-six, electrocuted a different site, was worth o $400,000? Both were married, and n ther was held responsible for the ac dent. A thirty-five-year-old HIV-p itive roofer who fell to his death w worth $2 million, even with a reduc life expectancy. Yet a twenty-four-ye old professional prizefighter was wo only $150,000. He was popping wheelie on his bicycle when a driver who admitted he wasn't paying atte tion—hit him. Why is he worth so tle when a deranged ex-convict, kill as he stopped his car on a train tra was valued at $500,000?

The *Reporter*'s editor, John Ki ton, points out that even within a si gle jurisdiction verdicts fluctuate wi ly,[3] which is why adjusters average t results of a range of reports. The qu ity of the adjusters and attorneys, t character of the witnesses, and—if t case goes go to trial—the temper ment of the judge and the jury fo man all dramatically affect the fi amount.

But it is *inter*-jurisdictionally th things get really bizarre. In some stat like New York, juries are instructed ignore most intangibles, to figure a p son's worth according to lost incor plus something for pain and sufferi Other states allow juries to consid the deceased's extracurriculars and a money for a love of golf or for spen ing summers in France. Not that t laws of the state matter much; in t end, juries act on emotion. Still, the are certain patterns: Farmers are mously stingy, perhaps because th are more familiar with death. Suburb Republicans are typically less gene ous than urban Democrats. Subu banites tend to sympathize with t

Most adjusters are male. Women are perceived to be more compassionate, though female adjusters argue that their compassion is designed to help them circumnavigate the randomness of jury awards. Every state has set compensation rates for injuries and deaths on the job, and lawyers need only consult a handy chart that spells out, say, $50,000 for a knee, $4,000 for a thumb, $85,000 for an eye. Some reformers would like auto accidents to be handled in the same way.

ıtity being sued, whereas urbanites, ıd especially minorities, often see ısiness or government as a long-anding adversary and believe that a ıerous award is the only chance sur-vors have for a better life. Thus ju-es in Brooklyn and the Bronx often nore New York law and ratchet up wards for intangibles they're not sup-osed to consider. The value of dead ıildren is particularly sensitive to anges in geography. A net drain on family's wealth, children are often orth only the cost of a casket in rur- and Republican counties. But in ur-ın counties, children can be valued the hundreds of millions.

People are generally worth the most all of New York City's boroughs except for Staten Island), Detroit, os Angeles, southern Texas,[4] and hicago. The stingiest areas are the estern states, Republican Bible Belt ounties, and the conservative sub-gbs ringing the most generous places: hicago's DuPage County; West-hester, New York; Connecticut; and uch of Michigan.

If I were killed while driving through hicago, Kirkton figured that, with a ecent education and prospects but o dependents, I would likely be worth round $1 million. If I were just forty inutes away, in rural Indiana, an adjuster told me I'd never top $35,000.

The notion that a wrongful death eserves monetary retribution is so in-rained in our capitalist system that e barely question it. But our "make em pay" attitude is hardly universal. he Amish don't sue in the face of agedy. If a parent dies, the community urtures the orphan. If a child dies, ey mourn and move on. "To file an surance claim[5] is an act of defiance gainst the norms of the community," sign that someone trusts neither his eighbors nor God's providence to help, says Donald B. Kraybill, author of *The Riddle of Amish Culture*. "It is irreligious," even a cause for shunning.

But in most societies retribution is as important as social support, and throughout history we've struggled to prevent unending cycles of vengeance slayings by paying off survivors. Around A.D. 600, the Anglo-Saxon king Æthelberht wrote the first of many legal codes that established different values for different sorts of people, and before long most Germanic tribes used this *wergild*, or man-price, to define a person's place in society. A person might be known as a 100-shilling man; his betters, 300-shilling men. In any case, the price was so exorbitant that the temptation to become wealthy from the (accidental or intentional) death of a loved one usually surpassed the desire to exact vengeance.

For centuries, negotiating a *wergild* was one of the few transactions in which actual money was used. But as capitalism gradually supplanted the bartering system with a monetary one, Protestant individualism preached that human life was unique and should not be bought and sold. Ergo, those convicted of a crime could no longer pay a *wergild* and walk free; those who accidentally lost a loved one had to turn to their community or trade guild for assistance. Industrialization, particularly railroads, led to another evolutionary step in the law. As trains hit and killed an increasing number of people, the wrongful-death lawsuit was born. In response, rail companies effectively created the casualty-insurance industry, and, with insurance money available, lawsuits grew in size and frequency. As new industries led to novel accidental deaths, corporate casualty insurance spread. In the 1920s a dramatic rise in automobile accidents prompted private citizens to get coverage; today, more than 75 percent of Americans and almost all businesses have "property/casualty" insurance. In forty-seven states, you can't own a car legally without having insurance.

The rise of casualty insurance [illegible] in some senses it drove [illegible] but it is also an integral [illegible] talism, a market-based system of checks and balances on corporations. Either in their manufacture or their consumption, virtually all products lead to some death and injury. The cost of litigation affects not only the good's price but also the standard of production. "Look at your car: every softened corner, every piece of padding," explains Ted Miller, an economist with the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation and formerly with the Department of Transportation. "Everything altered to avoid injuring you has been done because the manufacturers determined that making the change in the thousands of cars that don't crash will save them paying for the people who would have been killed in the cars that do."

To economists, this constant refinement makes much more sense than the arbitrary ways in which juries and adjusters value human life. Economists like Miller believe that these "untrained evaluators" have a huge and often illogical impact on the economy, and that the job of determining one's life price should be left to the marketplace. How? Each time we pay for a life-saving device we are, economists say, indirectly putting a value on our lives. If I decide not to buy a carbon-monoxide detector because it costs $12 and the odds are low—one in a million—that I might die of CO poisoning, I'm stating that my life is worth less than $12 million. If I pay $500 for an air bag that eliminates a one in 10,000 chance of dying, I'm valuing my life at $5 million. Economists have scrutinized every imaginable subgroup's risk-avoidance purchases: Sri Lankans; rural African Americans; urban Europeans. In America, the [illegible] human life at [illegible] million, which is 100 times more than a life may [illegible]

Although the purchase-based model is not applied by U.S. courts, it has a profound effect on national policy. Federal [illegible] proposed regulation with an expected annual economic impact of $100 million or more a year, have each developed a

One adjuster parable purports that Southern Pacific Railroad became so weary of the notoriously large verdicts awarded by juries in Matagorda County, Texas, that the company just rerouted its trains.

Adjusters dread cases involving the Amish because they won't file claims or witness reports, which can leave the case open. Adjusters hate open cases even more than they hate giving money away.

"If a man slays the dependent of a commoner, he shall pay [the commoner] 6 shillings compensation. If he slays a landowner's ceorl of the best class, he shall pay 80 shillings; if he slays one of the second class, he shall pay 60 shillings; [for slaying one of] the third class, he shall pay 40 shillings," and so forth.

more malleable

I now considers

Many of Miller's peers want to bring this concept into the courtroom, because they believe that life value should be determined by professional experts. But the judicial system considers life price to be a matter of opinion—and, therefore, for juries to decide. Moreover, risk-avoidance evaluation proposed by economists has serious practical and political limitations. People buy carbon-monoxide detectors when they see something scary on the news, not because they know they're preventing a one-in-a-million risk. And since such purchases are dependent on disposable income, this system would imply that CO detectors—place less value on their lives than the affluent." Can you imagine Congress announcing that, based on each group's purchases, the government has determined African Americans to be worth $1 million;

would settle in weeks, not years. But we

However sophisticated and modern the insurance industry now seems—and no business has sleeker office buildings—it is still based on vengeance. Were survivors willing to accept calculable losses—medical and

the person we lost was wonderful, that losing him or her was tragic, and we want the guilty party to pay. Yet we've transferred the task of negotiating retribution to a third party. Within hours of an accident, the perpetrator disappears from the proceedings; the adjuster becomes the focus of our anger, the target for our revenge.

I get a chance to see an adjuster in action when Ed invites me to spend a day with him in the field. As we climb into his flashy red convertible, he describes the "shithole" we'll visit, a filthy brown high-rise, one of New York City's housing projects, surrounded by a litter-strewn concrete park. It has "a urine problem. On a nice 90-degree day, woof." The first time he went there, some twenty years ago, he walked up twenty-seven funky floors to gauge what turned out to be the imaginary loss of an insane woman. "I was too stupid to say I wouldn't go up. It's a tough place to work. A tough area." While he parks, I ask if he's afraid his car will be stolen. "If I have to drive a piece-of-garbage car, I might as well hang up my adjuster's license," he says.

He also likes coming here; there are always interesting cases. Last week there were two separate pit-bull attacks, one on a toddler. The boy's father unclenched the jaws and threw the dog over a balcony rail. It hit the ground a dozen stories below, splattering a group of people sitting on a park bench. A few months ago, a seven-year-old boy plunged to his death when he leaned over the parapet to peek at a carnival below. The kid and his distracted babysitter were at fault, however, and the building's insurance company, which Ed represents, pays only when the accident is, or might be perceived to be, the fault of the management.

His first order of business is to get a sense of the basics. "You want to know what the age of the person is, what he did for a living, what kind of health he was in," he says. "Is he a squeegee man who has AIDS and is going to die in two weeks, or is he a bank president who has ten kids and is going to cost a fortune?" We stop at the building manager's office. Sitting behind her large desk, Patricia thumbs through a file of her notes on the case as the superintendent, Gary, stands nearby. She tells Ed what he wants to know: Francesca Rodriguez* was a sixty-six-year-old grandmother found dead in her kitchen after a fire burned down her next-door neighbor's apartment.

"She was ambulatory," Gary says. "She needed shots."

"She had medical problems," Ed says as he writes in his notebook. "Was she on public assistance? Welfare?"

"No," Patricia says. "She worked her whole life. She's retired."

"Was she a nice lady?"

"She was a nice *woman*," Patricia says forcefully. Ed rolls his eyes. "She was very good," Patricia continues. "A concerned person."

Patricia explains that the fire started around midnight a few days before when Rodriguez's neighbor was cooking pork chops or smoking a cigarette on the couch (her story keeps changing). As the fire spread, Rodriguez woke up, called for help, and then succumbed. Whether she succumbed to smoke inhalation or a heart attack was what Ed was here to figure out.

"How do we know she was awake?" Ed asks.

"Word of mouth from neighbors," says Gary. "She came out to the terrace, saw the fire, and went back inside."

"She panicked," Patricia adds.

The night of the fire the victim's son told Patricia that he would "own this place. We're going to sue the shit out of you." Ed looks disgusted. "The woman wasn't even cold yet," he says, "and he was threatening people. I don't think he had on his mind what he should have had."

For Ed, the key issue is Rodriguez's smoke alarm. If it worked properly, the building management met its legal requirement. Otherwise, they'll have to pay big. As Patricia and Gary rummage through Rodriguez's thick maintenance file to determine when her smoke alarm was last checked, we laugh about her neighbors. One threatened to sue for a smoke-damaged $4,000 couch. "If they have a couch that costs $4,000, they should sell it and move out of here," Ed scoffs.

* *Because the case was still open at the time of this writing, all names have been changed.*

could see the broad strokes but
lume of the emotional content of
driguez's life: why she left Puerto
o, who her best friends were, what
pened to her children's father. In
or three years, I'd will know more
out her than I'd ever want to
rough endless depositions, he'll
rn what made her happy, how she
nt her time. By then, even her chil
n will be used to her death, and her
's details will have one meaning:
that values preceded by a plus or mi
s sign.

We ride a dirty, noisy elevator to a
llway stinking of charred wood. As
walk toward the smell, the beige
ils gradually darken with soot; the
ck metal doors leading to apart
nts have warped and melted. In
e the apartment where the fire start
nothing stands higher than my
kles. The couch and dining room
ble have burned away; the floor is a
ggy black mass, the remains of every
ng that once was here. In the front
llway lies a round metal weight, the
nd that gets attached to a barbell. I
re at it. Who was lifting weights? It
med small, probably ten pounds. A
man then, or a child? Are they ath
ic, or was this bought in an optu
stic moment and soon abandoned?
s the only surviving clue about the
ple who live here.

Ed's goal is to photograph the two
oke detectors. Gary locates them
lted remains and Ed snaps away.

The woman who lives in this apart
nt got out and is fine. I guess Rodrigue lived next door. The fire de
rtment has chained off her apart
nt, so Ed climbs onto the balcony
uses a window washer's platform to
le over to Rodriguez's balcony. I stay
hind but can see through her win
w. There's no visible smoke dam
, no hint of fire. It looks as if she has
ne out shopping and will be right
ck. Drying towels hang on a small
oden rack, children's toys are strewn
out the kitchen floor. She died right
re, next to the toys, from smoke
halation or fear.

Ed climbs back and says, "This isn't
ite-pants work." I realize that his
rk wardrobe is no accident. He's
ound fires like this every day, in dead
ple's homes every day, and yet he
ms completely blasé. I understand
his detachment. When I come across a piece of tragedy, I immediately assess it a value: it's good for the story or it's not. Such constant appraisal shields us both from sadness. It's a lot easier to say, "Good, that's my opening paragraph," or, "Damn, that's another hundred grand," than to contemplate the loss of a grandmother's love. Of course, I find value in pathos, whereas Ed wants the death to have no particular drama. "It's like the bomber pilot. You're not thinking that you're killing somebody, you're just dropping bombs. You don't want to see the widow cry or the husband that lost a wife to a drunk driver. Oof, you can't do that. Could you imagine," he mocks mournfully, "'Somebody died again.' It would destroy your whole day, maybe your whole week."

As we head back to his car, I calculate how I would value Rodriguez if the management company were at fault. Her bases is next to nothing—he wasn't supporting anyone and she was sick. But the way she died was awful, and the toys indicate she was an active grandma. I write down a figure and ask Ed where he puts her value.

"Where he hits it, I'm sure," he says, "is if they can prove that she suffered for a period of time. She was conscious, worried." He gives me an estimate and then asks me not to publish it. I smile. I got it right.

In all of the United States, I found only one insurance company that attempts to take some of the callousness out of the profession. And so I go to INS Insurance in Green Bay, Wisconsin, to meet the apostles for "Empathic Adjusting." INS is a wholly owned subsidiary of Schneider National, the nation's largest trucking company. I drive through a pleasant stretch of Wisconsin farmland, where, in the midst of cornfields, the massive, blocky headquarters is surrounded by acres of parking lot. Inside, there's a clubish feeling of devotion to the company. The staff speak reverently about their boss, Don Schneider—"His office is no bigger than anyone else's"—and although I've come to talk about insurance, they insist I learn everything about trucking. Before I know it I'm behind the wheel of a gigantic tractor-trailer, speeding onto a skid pad—a parking-lot-sized



[illegible] that [illegible] and [illegible]

It's a small taste of what can happen to the more than 15,000 Schneider truck[illegible] highroads every day, racking up more than 2 billion miles a year. Small smashups occur [illegible] fatalities once every week, a Schneider truck somewhere kills [illegible]

Enter Frank Stackhouse. Frank is a calm sweet man who radiates comfort—lush dark hair, thick mustache, soft lulling voice. He takes me out for beers on my first night in Green Bay. I have a list of things I want to cover: his childhood and army service, how he became an adjuster and created INS's empathic program. I ask a question, he answers for a sentence or two, and then he gently asks me about myself. Suddenly, I realize I've been talking for twenty minutes and haven't learned a thing about him. Later, Frank uses my life story to illustrate his points. Over the [illegible] I spend with him, I come to like and trust him, even though I realize that this emotional seduction saves the company millions by getting survivors to settle for less.

Most INS cases still end up as the sort of adversarial contests to which Ed and George are accustomed. The empathic program works only when adjusters develop a close relationship with the survivors, as they've been able to do in 20 percent of their death cases since the program began in 1993. The program, Frank says proudly, has saved INS several million dollars.

To spread his gospel, Frank distributes his booklet on empathic adjusting to other insurance companies. In it, he suggests that adjusters do exactly what they have been trained never to do: immediately visit survivors at the hospital [illegible] the accident, and promise to help the family in every reasonable way. If the adjuster waits a few days, survivors harden under coaching by their attorneys. Once contact is made, the adjuster should call the family almost every day and attend and pay for the funeral.

The booklet has none of Frank's charm. The adjuster, he writes, should "more fully identify [himself] as a 'real person.' This includes the sharing, as appropriate, by the company representative of some similar experiences in their own life and how those issues were approached." In doing so, "opportunities may arise to identify areas of common interest such as family similarities, interests in similar hobbies or sports or regional ties."

Robin Savage Barker doesn't care how manipulative empathic adjusting seems. It works. Her husband, a driver for a different trucking company, was hit by a Schneider truck in 1994 and lingered for three weeks before he died. Frank called Robin within hours of the accident. She wouldn't come to the phone—"I thought he was the man who killed my husband," she says—but Frank persisted and soon they talked almost every day. She came to trust him more than her own attorney, and they soon settled for millions less than several lawyers advised her she could have won at trial. If Frank hadn't been so kind, so empathic, "I'd have really thrown my anger at him" and sued, she says. She believes, however, that a lawsuit would have mired her in years of mourning and rage. "If I did not have Frank helping me," she says. "I don't think I could have gotten through it."

Of course, with all this tenderness between them, the adjuster might get soft, so every week Frank's boss, Bob Lund, invites the entire staff to his office to assess the big cases. Bob's a weight lifter—he was Mr. Minnesota in 1990—and has a nervous energy and forceful style entirely unlike Frank's. Bob and I have a few quick, anxious conversations alone. Mostly he shakes his head, ignores my questions, and says, "It's a tough business. It's not easy." I keep thinking that this athletic, high-earning father of three is worth a whole lot more than I am.

I then watch the INS team discuss two victims. They agree that a seventeen-year-old girl who died a few weeks ago is worth no more than $200,000. She was a working-class rural girl and was partly to blame for the accident. A comatose twenty-seven-year-old surgery resident is worth at least seven figures whether she lives or dies. Her dying actually would be cheaper for INS; a lifetime of disability will cost far more.

When they're done, I ask if they would value my life. The eight adjusters all laugh. They have never v[illegible] ued themselves or someone they kn[illegible]

Bob claps his hands together in [illegible] let's-get-started manner. "You live [illegible] Cook County," he notes.

"Oh, Jeez," says an adjuster nam[illegible] Mehdi, laughing.

"No dependents?" Bob asks. No [illegible]

"Did you die immediately, or [illegible] you suffer?" asks an adjuster nam[illegible] Larry.

Bob smiles smugly. "You were [illegible] capitated." Then he asks, "What k[illegible] of upbringing did you have?" expla[illegible] ing that he likes to base a young p[illegible] son's worth, in part, on the parer[illegible] financial status and how much supp[illegible] the child would eventually be able[illegible] provide for them. I say that mine [illegible] artists, not well-off but culturally ri[illegible] Culture doesn't make a difference, [illegible] says.

He asks how much I make a yea[illegible] say I'm a freelance writer; it var[illegible] "Let's say you'll make 75 gran[illegible] year"—that's when I laugh—"for th[illegible] ty-five years. That's $2.6 million. I[illegible] duce it to present cash value and [illegible] $1.3 million. But they'll say you'd m[illegible] $100,000 a year," he says sarcastica[illegible] "They'd argue that you'd start y[illegible] own magazine. I wouldn't pay m[illegible] than $1.6 million."

My chest tightens. Frank gently a[illegible] that a marriage would add half a m[illegible] lion; each kid, another $500,000. [illegible] were an outdoorsman, he says, my v[illegible] ue would double. If I volunteered [illegible] went to synagogue, I'd go up 10 to [illegible] percent. If I called my mom and [illegible] more, I could add $300,000 each.) I[illegible] I'm consumed by my anger toward B[illegible]

And then it hits me. Adjusters c[illegible] really be empathic, but their call[illegible] assessments do push survivors throu[illegible] Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's requisite sta[illegible] of grief. Breaking death down into d[illegible] lars and cents makes it digestible [illegible] only to the marketplace but also [illegible] loved ones, who, in a world where fa[illegible] is not always a comfort, rely on c[illegible] t dism to find a silver lining in l[illegible] We don't like to see our values co[illegible] fied. There has been no grand deb[illegible] about how best to place a monet[illegible] value on human life. We just ha[illegible] this horrible job over to adjusters [illegible] demand that they come up with a [illegible] ure. "Adjusters don't think about [illegible] George says. "We just do it."

DOWN AND OUT AT WRIGLEY FIELD

A prayer for the Chicago Cubs

By Rich Cohen

When the Chicago Cubs last won a World Series, the automobile was still new and untrusted invention and the electric light was not yet twenty years old. In the years since the fifth game of that series, most of the European monarchies have collapsed, two world wars have been fought, Communism has risen and fallen, and disco has come and gone and come again. Losing year after year, sometimes in the last weeks of the season, more often in the middle of August, the Cubs have become a symbol of futility, the blind, never-ending hope of a hopeless people. Before his death, Jack Brickhouse, the great Cubs play-by-play man, excused the team by saying, "Everyone is entitled to a bad century."

For the Cubs, the current season has thus far played out like a dream. The team collected twelve straight victories in May and early June, a feat it had not accomplished since 1936—the year in which, incidentally, the Cubs did not reach the World Series. Despite the fact that such stretches come along once every five or six years in the manner of a remission that, for a time, masks the true direction of the disease, even the most cynical of fans sings, in a secret place hidden be-



ROGERS HORNSBY, CIRCA 1930

neath the heckles and beer, to the belief in eventual victory. But if 2003 is indeed the breakthrough year, if the new century indeed ushers in a rebirth of the franchise, these rooters will lose a treasure more valuable than any World Series ring: they will lose an enduring, dependable, nearly mystical relationship with loss.

Last August, hoping to discover the secret of this relationship, I checked into a hotel just off Michigan Avenue on the North Side of Chicago and prepared to "cover" the Cubs. The team had just come off a winning streak that had left them a few games below .500 and a half dozen games behind the division-leading St. Louis Cardinals, whom, in a few days, they would face at Wrigley Field. In other words, I had arrived at that most heartbreaking moment of any Cubs year: the false spring.

I went for walks along Rush Street, in and out of the bars. At Harry Caray's on Kinzie and Dearborn, watching the Cubs on television, I heard a [illegible] I shall refer to a towering Sammy Sosa home run as a "God Ball." He then picked a fight with an old man in a Brewers hat, saying, "I told it to you boys! In last place! We are in a solid third!" All we can do is [illegible] weep the one weep the next series, and go from there."

On State Street, I ran into a friend who had just returned from New York, where he had made his first visit to Yankee Stadium. The Yankees were great, of course, but he thought the stadium a disgrace. No one familiar with Cub fans would find this judgment at all unusual: the prevailing aesthetic is, of necessity, beauty above victory. Anyone who might [illegible] Yankee Stadium, monstrous, is a treasure. Why? Because winning [illegible] other hand, Wrigley Field, no matter how [illegible] an eyesore, because losing has made it [illegible] opposite. My friend said, "I'll tell you what, kid, that stadium, it sure made [illegible] at Wrigley Field."

[illegible] built in

Rich Cohen is the author of Tough Jews *and* The Avengers *(both from Knopf)*

baseball, to plant the ivy. It was his way of selling the fans the sunshine.

I grew up in the Chicago suburbs, about fifteen miles up Lake Michigan from Wrigley Field. In the summers, if I was not at the beach, or shopping for records at one of the stores uptown, or scanning the radio for my all-time favorite song, "Rhinestone Cowboy," I was riding the public bus to Evanston, where I caught the elevated train, which threaded its way through a private world of red brick and fire escapes



PLANTING IVY AT WRIGLEY FIELD, 1937

down to the ballpark. On the way I often read the sports section of the *Chicago Tribune*, or else a book about Cubs history. In school we studied the heroes and gods of antiquity, but for me the Cubs supplied a far handier mythology: the great teams of the eighties (the 1880s). The Cubs, a charter member of professional baseball, in 1876, first as the White Stockings, and then, in succession, as the Orphans, the Colts, and the Cubs, played in the Congress Street Grounds, the "nicest park in America," with 2,000 grandstand seats and velvet-curtained luxury boxes. Championships were won in 1880, 1881, 1882, 1885, and 1886. These were the teams of the legendary Cap Anson, who first devised the strategy wherein players run out of position to back up other players and, in another first, called for the banning of black athletes from the game. In his autobiography, Anson wrote of an early minority hire:

Clarence was a little darkey that I [illegible] met some time before while in Philadelphia. . . . I had togged him out in a s[illegible] brass buttons, at my own expense, and had engaged him mascot. He was an ungrateful lit[illegible] rascal . . .

There was Mike Kelly, a hard-drin[illegible] ing Irishman from the West Side, t[illegible] first catcher to communicate with t[illegible] pitcher in a secret code of often co[illegible] ical hand signals. There was Billy "T[illegible] Evangelist" Sunday, who, before sc[illegible] ing sinners with his fiery prophec[illegible] of hell, was a speedy, base-stealing o[illegible] fielder. In 1906, behind t[illegible] awesome double-play co[illegible] bination of Tinkers to Ev[illegible] to Chance, the team post[illegible] the best record in majo[illegible] league history, winning 1[illegible] games. After each victo[illegible] the players went drinking[illegible] Biggio Brothers Saloon[illegible] Polk and Lincoln Streets.[illegible] later years came Grov[illegible] Cleveland Alexander, a or[illegible] great pitcher who came ba[illegible] from the First World W[illegible] shell-shocked. When Ale[illegible] ander fell into seizures on t[illegible] mound, the infielders wou[illegible] shield him from view. In t[illegible] biopic, Alexander was play[illegible] by Ronald Reagan, who hi[illegible] self, as a young man, had called pla[illegible] by-play for the Cubs.

William Wrigley took control of t[illegible] Cubs in 1921 and fielded pennan[illegible] winning teams in '32, '35, and '3[illegible] These teams boasted such superst[illegible] as Kiki Cuyler, Hack Wilson, Billy Ju[illegible] ges, Babe Herman, and Rogers Hort[illegible] by. In 1932, Jurges was shot in a hot[illegible] room by a jilted lover in a black ve[illegible] an episode borrowed by Berna[illegible] Malamud for his novel *The Nature*[illegible] In 1929, Hornsby batted for a .380 a[illegible] erage with 149 RBIs. Hack Wilson[illegible] squat alcoholic of a power hitter, st[illegible] holds the record for most runs batte[illegible] in (190) during a single season. Aft[illegible] retirement, Hack became a drifter.[illegible] 1948, when he died, his body wei[illegible] unclaimed for three days. Ninetee[illegible] years earlier, in 1929, when the Cu[illegible] had lost the World Series, Wilson to[illegible] a train of badgering reporters, "Let m[illegible] alone now, fellows. I haven't anythi[illegible] to say except that I am heartbroke[illegible]

By the time the Cubs moved here in 1916, they had already won their last World Series. Over the years, with the [illegible] most other early twentieth-century ballparks, Wrigley has emerged as a lone witness to the glorious dead-ball era. After generations of artificial turf and multipurpose stadiums, a new generation of architects has come to emulate Wrigley, building snug downtown parks in Baltimore, Cleveland, and Houston. For the most part, though, these stadiums are mere approximations, with none of the [illegible] grime, of the real thing, none of that terrible history. Wrigley Field is, after all, where, in the 1932 World Series, Babe Ruth supposedly called his shot, pointing two fingers at center field, then hitting a home run into the centerfield [illegible]

When I went to the games as a kid, I sat in the bleachers, home of the sport's most rabid fans. For a bleacher bum, it was a signal achievement to so incense an enemy outfielder that he climbed the wall in an attempt to get at you. I was at a game in which Omar Moreno of the Pirates started that climb only to be pummeled and covered in beer. Of course, such a climb was made possible by that most famous feature of Wrigley: the ivy, the lush green ivy, which softens all that red brick.

Now, here is the disturbing part: that ivy, that beloved, ticket-selling ivy, is a direct outgrowth of management [illegible] that the Cubs would never again win a World Series. In 1931, when chewing-gum magnate William Wrigley died, he left the team to his son, P. K. Wrigley, who refused to waste company resources on baseball; he decided that fans must instead be given a reason other than player competence to go to the park. "The fun . . . the sunshine, the relaxation. [illegible] a ball game, win or lose," said P.K., who then told a young Bill Veeck, who would later become one of the [illegible]

ne alive in sixty-five," or,
ne Cubs will be heaven-
in sixty-seventy." In my
Reuschel brothers, fat,
stachioed, glasses-wear-
Reuschels, Rick and
d, the pitcher. Over the
s. In this era, due to years
futility—the team had
t even been in the post-
son since 1945—
ween fans and manage-
nt, peaking in 1983,
fen, during a postgame press con
ence, skipper Lee Elia attacked
acher bums, saying,

ng playground for the cocksuckers

UBS 7, CARDINALS 3

Each day the Cubs lineup was post-
with
d, a center fielder, who came in a
de from Boston; Joe Girardi, a born-
an Chicagoan from
to start behind the Cubs'
and had promised to
r in Chicago; Mark Grace, the
nd-haired, goateed first baseman,
oked a cigarette at his locker; Willie
eene, a third baseman from
Ridgecrest, California, the
ronto Blue Jays; Ricky Gutierrez,
edgy, error-prone shortstop, a free
m from the Houston Astros; and
yers, a twenty-five-year-old infielder
o looked like a sitcom sidekick on

the WB (a Cubs fan from Nebraska,
Meyers was, as a kid, certain the Cubs
Brant Brown, an outfielder who, in
1998, had dropped a routine fly ball



HALL OF FAMERS HACK WILSON,
ROGERS HORNSBY, AND KIKI CUYLER

that almost kept the team out of
that year's postseason play.

At three o'clock, only the
pitchers were in uniform,
and Kerry Wood, Kent
Mercker, and Terry Mulholland
were
Link, sullen-faced Texan
savior of the team. In 1998, at twenty,
record. A few months later he blew out
his pitching arm; he was still recovering
from the surgery. In his locker he had
mounted a Big Mouth Billy Bass, the
talking mechanical fish, which, on occasion, he let answer the press queries:
I'm the Big Mouth Billy Bass."

Cubs, showed up shouting, a man of
entrances. Although the players in the
clubhouse were listening to Pearl Jam,
playing salsa music, the sound of his
native Dominican Republic. Someone
grungy Pacific Northwest. Sosa closed
and each day, it ended with the Pearl
was not hard to tell how Sosa's team-

By three o'clock the re-
floor. Now and then, one of these re-
was welcomed or rebuffed, the reporter
would return saying, "Wow, what a

To reach the field we followed the
clatter of cleats through a dank tunnel
power alleys. The field was cracked
tional game. Each
gathered for batting practice. They

and I was struck by his body, which seemed to me old-fashioned, a body from the Great Depression: thick torso and heavy arms, social realism, a WPA poster. He had spent the previous four seasons in New York, where he won three World Series. How could he now play for a team that never wins, has never won, and, it seems to many of us, never will?

"When I was in third grade, I wrote an essay about how I would play for the Cubs," Girardi said. "Ten times a summer, I drove with my father from Peoria just to see the games." Back then, his favorite players were Ron Santo, a third baseman who, as a broadcaster, still travels with the team, and Jose Cardenal, remembered mostly for his vertiginous Afro, on top of which, the cherry on the ice-cream sundae, perched his cap. Cardenal is credited with the worst excuse ever given for missing a game: he once told his manager he could not play because his eyelid was stuck open. "When I left the Cubs that first time, I was crushed," said Girardi. "I had always wanted to [illegible]."

I asked why the team never wins.

"The Yankees have a hundred-million-dollar payroll. Our club is sixty million. And there is also all the money spent on the minor leagues and free agents, signing kids from the Dominican, from Puerto Rico. But it's more than that. In New York, you go into spring training expecting to get to the World Series. You feel it when you walk in the clubhouse—the pictures of all those Yankee greats, the monuments. There is something special about putting on the pinstripes. In Chicago, they hope for a good season, maybe the play-offs."

"But they have pictures here at Wrigley Field," I said. "The Cub greats, [illegible]."

"Yeah, but just think about those pictures," he said. "Still shots, each player by himself. In Yankee Stadium, it's group shots, the team celebrating on the mound, in the clubhouse, the [illegible]. Here you won't see that."

When Girardi went to take batting practice, I wandered out onto the field. The players chirped and fluttered around like [illegible] players from the Golden

nals met one another with backslaps and hugs. "In our day, there was no fraternizing," Ron Santo told me. "You never saw one team up watching the other team hit. Never saw a guy hugging the other guy. You walked across the white lines, money was not the criteria. Winning was." Sosa greeted every Latin player on the Cardinals, then wandered over to the seats, the crowd bubbling before him like surf. He spotted two friends from the Dominican and led them out onto the field. They were potbellied, sleepy-eyed, with slow, sad smiles; one wore a silk shirt decorated with naked girls, fast cars, tropical sunsets.

I walked over to a circle of beat reporters, three of them: a young banana-shaped one; a middle-aged, balding, red-haired one; and an old stately one with no hair at all. I said hello. Without a word, each turned his back on me. It took me some time to realize that these reporters, who after each game filed stories for the *Tribune*, the *Sun-Times*, and a third paper I had never heard of, were actually participants in the Cubs' perpetual loss and naturally took a pride in the project that made it necessary to resent someone like myself, who had come aboard the *Titanic* to snap a few shots before shoving off. Of course, that ship was at least heading toward a conclusion, a climax. The Cubs, on the other hand, were and are forever adrift.

The only friend I made among the press was a kid entirely untouched by the stinking heartbreak of history. His name was Nick, and he was on summer break from Drake University in Iowa. He had landed a part-time job writing about the Cubs for his hometown newspaper in Oak Park. A few times a week Nick went to the clubhouse and, without the least hesitation, pulled aside his favorite players. Before this game, he had talked to some of the Cardinals, even to Will Clark, rumored to be the crankiest man in the league.

Nick said, "Can I ask you some questions, Mr. Clark?"

Mr. Clark said, "Get the fuck away from me, kid."

Nick told me that Mr. Clark had [illegible] beer.

Nick led me up to the press b[ox] high above home plate. As we tall[ked] I could see the lake, blue and crol[led] ed with sailboats, beyond the ap[art]ment buildings. The game was a s[old] out, standing room only, men [and] women at the back of the bleach[ers] in sketchy outline. To some, this [re]mained the best explanation for [the] Cubs' woes: if a team with a los[ing] record sold 40,000 tickets on a M[on]day night and drew, win or lose, 2 m[il]lion fans a year, while the White S[ox] in first place on the South Side of [the] city, could not even sell out on a S[at]urday afternoon, what was the inc[en]tive? Why should the Tribune C[om]pany, which owns the Cubs, spe[nd] millions to build a winning team [if] all these years later, the fans were s[till] willing to pay for sunshine? "We h[ave] a lot of that," Kevin Tapani, a C[ub] pitcher, told me. "But I don't know [of] any player that says, 'We've got a s[old] out crowd, let's lose.'"

Of course, Tapani, at thirty-six, [was] precisely the sort of player a te[am] might go after if it was not determi[ned] to win; that is to say, yes, Tapani tr[ied] to win, but perhaps, at this point in [his] career, he was no longer good enou[gh] to win consistently. And yet—t[he] Cubs *did* spend money. Not so much [as] the Dodgers or the Orioles but m[ore] than some successful teams (the Kan[sas] City Royals, the Oakland A's), a[nd] they traded for players and hired ma[n]agers who had won elsewhere. A Cu[b] fan therefore learns to distrust the e[asy] answers and to accept each mome[nt] each game, for what it is, not for wh[ere] it is leading, which is nowhere. A v[ic]tory, any victory, is a victory. Li[ke] tonight, for example, with a wa[rm] breeze off the lake, and the sun goi[ng] down (ah, that beautiful Cubs su[n]shine), and the team at last stirring [to] life. Jeff Huson, a journeyman thi[rd] baseman, with teeth as small and pe[r]fect as white Chiclets, drove a ba[ll] down the left-field line, scoring th[ree] winning runs. And then we were fo[l]lowing the ramps down to the clu[b]house, where the players, having a[l]ready changed into Nike show[s] sandals and gym shorts, ate fried chic[ken] off Styrofoam plates and watche[d] SportsCenter on ESPN. There w[as] music, there was clowning. Cubs wi[n]. Cubs win!



WRIGLEY FIELD, TODAY

Three hours before the first
ch, Carol Slezak, a columnist
r the *Sun-Times*, was in the
s gout, looking for a story. Base-
ll is a world of men, and so it
s strange and pleasing to see a
oman on the field. Some of the
ler Latin coaches commented
Slezak's eyes, her legs. "You
making me uncomfortable."
e said. "Stop it." A year ago,
Slezak had written a column about
osa's music, how it had become
irritating and never-ending
undtrack. Sosa and Glenallen
ill (since traded) had pulled her
ide and yelled at her. "Do you
ow how angry Sammy's team-
ates are at you?" Hill said. "They
ve Sammy."

"Do you want to hear what
mmy's teammates say about his
usic?" asked Slezak.

Sammy told her, "Fuck my team-
ates."

Today, Carol was in a pregame pan-
. Her deadline was a few hours away
d she had yet to find a subject. Play-
s suggested she write about the heat.
have a policy," she said. "No stories
out weather." Mark Grace greeted
r in a large way and sat at the end
the bench, determined to help.
ch generation, there is one Cub
o seems, for fans, to stand for the
am. For the last several years that
d been Grace. Previously, it had
en Ryne Sandberg, Bill Buckner,
ck Monday, Ernie Banks. One of
e great things about baseball is that,
setting these players, whose careers
erlap, in a time line, you can link
urself clear back to Mike Kelly and
hnny Evers. After suggesting sever-
stories, which Carol dismissed,
race said, "What about the heat?"

Grace took off his hat, rubbed his
lp. A few weeks earlier, several Cubs
d shaved their heads in a gesture of
idarity. Grace was lucky; he looked
od. Some of the other guys had
erged knotty-skulled, or bug-eyed,
jug-eared. Grace talked about being
irty-six. In the minor leagues, the
bs were developing Hee Seop Choi,
Korean power-hitting first baseman,
take his position. To a player like
race, this was what the end must
ok like—a husky nobody from the minors with no feel for the game.

Mark Grace was the classic Cub playing in a pointless doubleheader on an August afternoon with the wind blowing in and nothing on the line but a flutter at the bottom of the standings. Only a player like Grace, who got the joke of being a Cub and still reveled in it, could possibly explain to me how and why it was that each Cub season began and ended in futility.

I asked him if there was any thrill to being the spoiler, stopping some other team from making the play-offs—often the only role left for the Cubs. "No, I don't take a whole lot of pleasure in it," he said. "But the last thing you want is somebody clinching on your turf, mobbing, pouring bubbly on your field."

Sosa emerged from the tunnel and shouted, "I just took a big shit. It feels good when you take your big shit."

The temperature at game time was [illegible]. In the [illegible] innings, the umpire left the game [illegible] exhaustion. I asked Carol Slezak if the players were upset after such a loss, and she said, "They pretend to be." The next day, in the *Sun-Times*, I read her story about how exceptionally hot it was at the game.

At the end of the season, Grace, [illegible], asked Cubs management to [illegible] contract with the Arizona Diamondbacks. At the press conference he [illegible]: "I have to pass this [illegible] time the team and I want [illegible] right now. [illegible] thirteen years [illegible] Cubs. Cub greats have often met a dubious end. In my era, Bill Buckner was traded to Boston at the end of his career, where, in game six of the 1986 World Series, he let a routine grounder hop between his legs, costing the Red Sox their first championship since 1918. This inevitably leads to Mike Royko's Cubs theorem. If you want to determine the outcome of any particular baseball game, simply calculate which team has more ex-Cubs. That's your loser. There are exceptions to this rule—players who go on to win Cy Young Awards [illegible] but these usually result from awful deals. The worst trade in team history sent twenty-game winner Milt Pappas to St. Louis [illegible] change for thirty-seven-year-old Ernie Broglio, a warhorse of a pitcher who would retire a year later.

Even after a player retires from the Cubs, he remains [illegible] god in the pantheon of loss. For players traded [illegible] lation. The smart ones, who understand a thing or two about history, must know that they will never be part of a dynasty here. Kevin Tapani remembered [illegible] 'Well, I was not a loser to start with, I [illegible] I will not carry on like a loser.'" Some deluded

Cubs even speak of being part of the team that at last breaks the streak. But fans—some of us, anyway, who know the truth—pity the talented young prospect who, having won in Little League, high school, and everywhere else, finds himself on the Cubs. *Hope you enjoyed the ride, friend. Because, barring a trade, your winning days are over.* In return such a player, if he is good enough to make an impression, is rewarded with Chicago's excess Cubs as it loves no other athletes. The Cubs personify Chicago's striving, the pride that locals take in even the smallest construction, the sense that the rest of the country, especially New York City, is giving us the high hat.

This love was in evidence a few minutes before yet another afternoon game against the Cardinals, as Ryne Sandberg, who for twelve seasons was the star of the Cubs, wandered across the infield to shouts and cheers. In 1994, Sandberg, the highest-paid player in the game, had returned millions of dollars and gone into early retirement, saying he wasn't happy with his performance. He came back in '96, found that he had lost his swing, and retired again. It was like watching someone grow old in public. He was now an instructor with the team. On the field, he wore pretaded jeans and a button-down shirt and moved with the stiffness one expects in a retired athlete, his glossy, handsome face turning red in the sun.

For every Cub fan, there is a season, an inning, an at bat, when all hope is lost, when, at long last, he becomes disillusioned and realizes with dread certainty that no matter how good its prospects the team will never win. "The better they look," my father had warned, "the bigger the heartbreak." For some, hope was lost in 1969, when, after decades of loss, the management fielded an uncharacteristic collection of future Hall of Famers and all-stars. By September 1 the team was in first place by eight games. After each victory, Ron Santo, the third baseman, would jump up and click his [illegible]

A New Yorker, my father had urged me to [illegible] cheering for the Cubs I would come

singing, "Hey hey, holy mackerel, no doubt about it, the Cubs are on their way!" By mid-September they had been overtaken by the expansion New York Mets, who went on to sweep the World Series. "The Mets were not a team you worried about," Santo told me. "It was divine intervention. God just lived in New York that year."

For some, hope was lost in 1989, when the Cubs, with Mark Grace at first base, were swept in the play-offs by the San Francisco Giants. For some it was in 1998, with Sosa hitting all those homers and the team still looking pathetic in the play-offs. For me it was 1984 and the collapse of the great team anchored by Ryne Sandberg, who that year won the National League MVP. In 1981 the Wrigley family had sold the franchise to the Tribune Company, filling the loyalists with hope. Whereas the Wrigleys had refused to spend top dollar on talent, often trading away their best prospects and, what's worse, evincing a kind of country-club racism, for years signing no black players and then signing only a few, the Tribune Company was a cash-rich empire. For the first time in years real money was spent on the Cubs. A new general manager was brought in, and soon he had built the first team I ever really cared about. That team had Lee Smith, the fire-throwing relief pitcher, and Rick Sutcliffe, the red-headed ace, and Harry Caray, the great broadcaster, the true visage of the Cubs, who told you not what players were averaging but what they *should* be averaging were the world a decent place. "He's really up around .400," Harry would say. "He's hit the ball well, but at people." Harry said that the Cubs infield was not only the most competent in the game but by far the best looking: "Sandberg: classical good looks. Bowa: scrappy, smewy, and sexy. Cey: just look at that guy! Durham: what woman would not [illegible]"

The team won the National League East by six and a half games. In August several Cubs, including Sutcliffe and Durham, released a country song that my brother called "a crime—an idiotic, stupid, jinx-inducing crime." The song went like this: "As sure as there's ivy on the center-field wall, the men in blue are gonna win it all." And: "We're on top and looking down and picking up more steam." And: "There's bec[illegible] lots of talk about no lights in Wrigl[illegible] Park, we don't care, if we make it ther[illegible] we'll play in the dark."

The Cubs at that time were th[illegible] only professional team without lights—a fact that, from time to time, was suggested as a reason for their woes. Who[illegible] the team played night games on th[illegible] road, so went the reasoning, they we[illegible] out of sorts, up past their bedtime. I[illegible] 1984 the commissioner of baseball w[illegible] more concerned with the fact that n[illegible] night games at Wrigley meant th[illegible] league would be robbed of prime-tim[illegible] TV revenue. As a result, the Cubs, [illegible] a great miscarriage of justice, we[illegible] stripped of their home-field advantag[illegible] which, in the best-of-five play-o[illegible] proved crucial. I skipped school to a[illegible] tend the first game, which the Cu[illegible] won in a blowout. I followed game tw[illegible] at school, checking the score betwee[illegible] classes on TV: another victory. Th[illegible] Cubs then went to San Diego, whe[illegible] they had to win only one of the ne[illegible] three games to clinch a trip to th[illegible] World Series. In each game the Cu[illegible] went into the seventh inning with th[illegible] lead. In each game they choked. Th[illegible] final blow came with a home run [illegible] Steve Garvey, the square-jawed Padr[illegible] first baseman at the end of his caree[illegible] The footage of the ensuing trot, Ga[illegible] vey pumping his fist, suggested ever[illegible] thing that is wrong with the world.

ARIZONA 11, CUBS 2
ARIZONA 11, CUBS 5
ARIZONA 5, CUBS 4

Sooner or later every Cubs fan, [illegible] he is at all reflective, comes to reali[illegible] that if the Cubs were somehow to ca[illegible] off the past and win, they would n[illegible] longer be the Cubs. There is a thrill [illegible] victory, yes, but there is a certainty [illegible] defeat, and is losing not, in the en[illegible] more righteous than winning? Sur[illegible] the team might enjoy the arrogan[illegible] of victory for a season or two, or thre[illegible] or however long it lasted, but it wou[illegible] thereby destroy the more interestin[illegible] part of its identity. It would becon[illegible] just another club that won not lo[illegible] ago and is now not so good and not [illegible] bad. *The first shall be the last and t[illegible] last shall be the first.* But what of tho[illegible] in the middle?

Since 1908, ninety-two tean[illegible] have had hard luck, like the Re[illegible]

s, who have not won the World
es in eighty-three years, but the
Sox have often come deep into
Series. Perhaps there is more of a
g to the near miss, but the deep
, the good stuff, is only to be had
never even comes close. If one
lose, it may as well be spectacu
, as was the case with the series l
in Arizona. Everything went
ng. Every play was botched.
ry player stank. If this were a
movie I would title it, sim
ply, *Three Days in August*.

The Diamondbacks play in a
l of terrarium, a vast biosphere
he center of Phoenix with a re-
table roof and seats running
r up to the great glass panels. It
well over 100 degrees out there
he desert, but inside it is always a
k 72; there is even a kind of au-
n crispness in the air. Each play-
equipment had been hung in
ers on the far side of the club-
se. Unfortunately, Sosa's locker
at some distance from an elec-
al outlet, and thus he could not
in his radio. A work crew was
ght in to run an extension cord
ss the floor, which a pitcher pro-
led to trip on.

cross the room sat a table with a
of magazines, on top of which was
orts Illustrated Where Are They
v? issue that showed William "Re-
erator" Perry, a lineman for the
rs, once a famous athlete in Chica-
in a hard hat and work clothes,
r the words, "Bricklayer, Aiken,
th Carolina." The Cubs walked by
magazine as if it had nothing to do
h them. They watched, on DVD,
scene in *Last Times at Ridgemont*
h in which Judge Reinhold, caught
turbating in the bathroom, says,
esn't anyone around here knock?"
made the jerk-off motion—a
er-room gesture so basic and true
as like a revelation.

the dugout, Mark Grace was talk-
with Joe Garagiola, himself a for-
catcher and now the vice presi-
t and general manager of the
mondbacks. Grace told Garagiola
he considered himself a throw-
, an old-fashioned player, demon-
ed by the fact that, among other
gs, he did not wear batting gloves,
saying he prefers "the feel of the wood." Since he was a rookie, he said, the big change in the game had been pitchers, who no longer intimidated in the same way. If, as a rookie, Grace had come to the plate following a home run, he could have expected the next pitch to be a fastball at his back, "between the one and the seven." Now, Grace said, pitchers were nervous about getting tossed from a game that "the best ball to hit is the one right after the home run." The following night, after Sammy Sosa's long home run off Randy Johnson, the next pitch is a fastball, to Grace, "between the one and the seven."

HOUSTON 5, CUBS 4

With each loss, the clubhouse grew noticeably darker. There was no music during the losing streak, no chatter. Only the sound of Sosa talking with reporters about his most recent home run—a moon shot that kissed the outer glass of Enron Field before falling back into the seats. With each home run, you could see the chasm widening between Sammy and his teammates. "I never really watch the ball," Sosa said. "I put my head down and run the bases. But I know I got that one good." In the locker room, Tim Worrell, a pitcher who gave up a homer that meant a lot more than Sammy's, sat with his head in his hands. A coach, stationed before a VCR, with two empty beer cans at his side, watched the home run, freezing the frame just prior to the disaster: Worrell in his follow-through, the ball hanging like a pigeon over the plate. The coach took notes, rewound, lived through the terrible moment again, then hit fast-forward: the batter, with hickety-split cartoon speed, dashed around the bases to score.

I think I wanted to travel with the Cubs and see them suffer in return for all of the suffering they have caused me. But being on the road with the team in a true slump—well, I guess I had no idea how awful it would be: the stillness of the clubhouses, the eyes on the floor, the jumpiness. Mark Grace saying, "I'm 0 for this road trip, and that really sucks," and after every game the manager, Don Baylor—why does a manager wear cleats?—making his statement to the press, the gener-

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A

NEW BOOKS

y Guy Davenport



A few years ago a contingent of serious Japanese tourists came to the Kierkegaard Archive in Copenhagen, stood in a line facing the philosopher's standing desk, bowed together, and chanted in English (the Scandinavian lingua franca), "Sollen Kikklegardu, founder of Western Existentiarism!" And left. A friend and I were next. The scholarly keeper of the archive (letters, manuscripts, memorabilia, editions of the books, the desk at which they had been written) still wore an amused smile. But once he'd heard us say the name more or less correctly (*Kierkegaard*) and ascertained, cleverly, that we'd read him, he relaxed and allowed me to write in my notebook at Kierkegaard's desk, and taught me how to pronounce Søren properly.

Things were not always so. Copen-

Guy Davenport was the recipient, in May, of the Academy Award in Literature, given by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. This is his monthly column.

hagen's first acquaintance with its world-famous philosopher was of a freckle-faced schoolboy with a crest of blond hair who had a tongue on him. His scholarly nickname was Socks (father a hosier). They next knew him as a whiz at Greek and math, a dandy in the chocolate houses (chessboards painted on tabletops), a brainy doctoral candidate who got away with writing his thesis in Danish, not Latin. He went on to write a small library of books, all pseudonymously. He became a recluse whose daily walk around the ramparts of Kastellet was a Copenhagen institution (the place on the sidewalk where he lifted his [illegible] marked). In time the Danes put up a Lincolnesque statue of him outside the National Library, seated and reading a Bible. More recently, the world's most liberal and decent democracy has erected a second statue, in a ring of Danish theologians, all in clerical robes and Rembrandt collars, all except Søren, who stands toppishly in a boulevardier's knee breeches and swallowtail [illegible] *Kierkegaard as he ever was!*



Now a professor at the University of Oslo, Alastair Hannay, has given us

(Cambridge University Press, $39.95)—dedicated "To whom this may concern"—a lucid and conscientiously [illegible] dwelling attention to the fine details. All books on Kierkegaard are tedious, and [illegible] What *did* the man think? How is Christianity "ironic"? No philosopher has ever taken such obscure roads to making himself understood.

[illegible] about Kierkegaard, we know almost [illegible] Dutch painter Johannes Vermeer [illegible] lived his forty-three years in Delft, begat fifteen children, and painted an unknown number of pictures, of which thirty-five survive. Of these, five or six are perfect examples of the [illegible] exquisite records of private life in seventeenth-century Holland, the age of Spinoza and Antonie van Leeuwenhoek, of tulips and *De Artibus* [illegible] catalogue, because of the long s before an *f*, as "dattodil").

It [illegible] engaging of English prose stylists and one of the most civilized of the old *New Yorker* writers, Anthony Bailey, should turn his hand to writing the painter's life, in

(Holt, $27.50). He reconstructs the city in its days of blue tile, china, and beer. He has tracked [illegible] and acquaintances. A later chapter charts the painter's rediscovery (by a fictional [illegible] and the [illegible] ship, forgery, and theft surrounding his work. But how [illegible] V. Lucas's "On the Track of [illegible] writing at a time when J. Pierpont [illegible] were buying Vermeers as quickly as they came to light. (Actually, thanks to re-ascriptions, there are fewer [illegible] a novelist, essayist, and editor of *Punch*, felt like Proust and Anthony Bailey—that in Vermeer he had found a perfect painter, an artist whose skills matched his subject in a kind of miracle. Vermeer concentrates on people concentrating: reading, making lace, working in the

kitchen, playing music. This was just what bothered eighteenth- and nineteenth-century

This last is a sentence not from Bai- (Counterpoint, $15). Markson's book is 190 pages of interesting words or sentences, about ten to a page: unrelated remarks (seemingly, but look again—they're a guessing game). Many of them tell us

Many are bits of intellectual folklore displayed in ironic tweezers. They create associations the way soap bubbles pack into cubes and hexagons. Every reader will find a different order in this kaleidoscopic

Another strange new book, both like and unlike Markson's, is John D'Agata's (Graywolf, $24.95). It, too, looks to be impenetrable at first glance. The book form invented by D'Agata himself—sentences strung like a spiderweb over a subject: the people who flock to Hoover Dam, the damned who wander around and work in Las Vegas, people who *know* that we have captive space aliens in New Mexico. Somehow D'Agata manages never to condescend.

say the townspeople of Rachel, population 91, we could save the aliens,

D'Agata is an alchemist who changes trash into purest gold. Both he and Markson are "experimental" writers who defy all we know and ■

UP FROM EXTREMISM

Getting it wrong about the American right

By Kevin Baker

Discussed in this essay:

Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus by Rick Perlstein. Hill and Wang, 2001. 671 pages. $30.

In January of 1964 the Barry Goldwater campaign rolled into the rock-ribbed, conservative state of New Hampshire, ready to do battle for the Lord and the Republican nomination for president. The Goldwaterites were supremely confident, and they had every reason to be. At that moment they were the best-organized, most ruthless political force in the country. Bolstered by oceans of cash and thousands of volunteers, they had been planning and training for this moment for nearly three years. The only thing that stood in their way was New York's liberal governor, Nelson Rockefeller, and his campaign had been hemorrhaging steadily since the previous spring, when, having divorced his wife of many years, he had wed a divorcée.

After weeks of filling halls with cheering crowds, the campaign tramped confidently to the polls on March 10, the day of the New Hampshire primary, and, in a record turnout, drew . . . 23 percent of the vote. Goldwater finished fourteen points behind a write-in campaign run on behalf of Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. (then serving as ambassador in Saigon) by four self-appointed gadflies with virtually no money. He finished just barely ahead of Rockefeller—and another write-in campaign organized on behalf

Goldwater continued to under-

will be published by HarperCollins in spring 2002. His last essay for Harper's

whelm in almost every primary entered. He lost a crucial showdo to Rockefeller in Oregon by ne 2–1, finishing a distant third beh Lodge. Only by squeaking out a tory in California (after Ha Rockefeller gave birth to the couple's first child on the day be the primary) was Goldwater spa from losing every important test faced at the polls.

And yet, at the Republican C vention in San Francisco that J while thousands of his admirers sh the rafters of the Cow Palace, G water breezed to the nomination the first ballot. The question of such a thing could have come to is at the heart of Rick Perlstein's book, *Before the Storm: Barry Gold ter and the Unmaking of the Amer Consensus*. It is also, sadly, the para that undoes his argument at every t

For Perlstein, the real political ry of the 1960s was the rise of the r wing. Goldwater's nomination mar the movement's coming of age, a tory that would forever rend what author characterizes as a smug, hub tic, and ultimately dangerous lib consensus. "After the off-year electi a mere two years later [in 1966], c servatives so dominated Congress t Lyndon Johnson couldn't even ge a majority to appropriate money rodent control in the slums," Perls writes.

It hardly mattered that Goldw had failed to impress in the prima or that he would go down to a cr ing defeat in November. In P stein's assessment the "moveme that developed around him wa

erful and solid that it took on its
momentum.

was something; beyond the week
ne year, the campaign, even the
decade, it was a cause. You lost in
964. But something *remained* after
964: a movement. An *army*. An
my that could lose a battle, suck it
p, regroup, then live to fight a thou-
nd battles more.

or Perlstein, the
ch of this army leads
corably to the tri-
phs of Nixon, Rea-
and the Bushes, one
two; to Gingrich and
ia; and, by the same
n, to the abject ap-
sement displayed by
Clintons and the
nocratic Leadership
mcil. "Here is one
, at least," Perlstein
es, "in which history
written by the
s."

erlstein's book is an
mpt to determine
who these "losers"
e and how they ti
ly won—to chart
many tributaries of
ght and action that
t feed into the main
ent of any success-
American political
ement. It is a wor-
endeavor, the sort
hing that has been
e repeatedly for the
t liberal-left move-
ts in such outstand-
works as Lawrence
dwyn's *The Popu-*
Moment, Arthur
lesinger Jr.'s *The*
of Roosevelt, Irving
stein's *A History of the American*
ker, Richard Kluger's *Simple Jus-*
and Taylor Branch's superb, on-
g account of Martin Luther King
nd the civil-rights movement.

fore the Storm is every bit as am-
us. Perlstein has done copious re-
h, which is shown to best effect in
book's early chapters, as he traces
evolution of right-wing ideology
e World War II. He bends over
ward to be fair in these segments,
yet one is struck by nothing so
much as how utterly dismal modern conservative thought has been. Here is the old gallery of grotesques: Robert Welch, the candy magnate who founded the John Birch Society—and who was known ever after to its adherents as "The Founder"—giving his two-day lectures on how the Eisenhower Administration was a Communist plot;



Phyllis Schlafly, the Harvard-educated activist, leaving home on her never-ending junket to insist that women stay in the home; William Buckley Jr., blithely using dad's money to champion rugged individualism.

Here are all the endless conspiracy theories and the teeny-tiny revelations; the obsessions with taxes and government regulations and the United Nations; the antifluoridation campaigns and the nuclear wet dreams. Ronald Reagan, seeing the light in his unfortunate [illegible] stump speech for General Curtis LeMay [illegible] Force chief of staff memorializing preemptive nuclear strikes against the Russians, the Chinese, the Cubans. George Wallace swearing like a latter-day Scarlett O'Hara: "I will never nevah be out-nigguhed again!"

It is a masterful, if not [illegible] overview. Yet in more ways it raises a question quite different from the one it meant to answer. How could such thin soil have produced a truly mass democratic movement?

As early as 1960, conservative hopes had become centered on Barry Goldwater, a blunt, likable senator from Arizona, endowed with rugged good looks and a small personal fortune from an inherited department store. He had also barely completed a year of college and was widely thought to lack the intellectual breadth necessary to be an American president in the twentieth century.

Thus was it commonly believed that Goldwater himself was modest enough to [illegible] and besides, most right-wingers doubted that they could really [illegible] their own nominated anyway. Time and again, conservatives from "the heartland" had watched [illegible] nominating conventions [illegible] ing they had the [illegible] nominate their great champions, Robert Taft. Yet somehow an eastern Wall Street cabal had always supplied enough money or enough influence to supplant Taft with a more moderate candidate [illegible] hower, or Herbert [illegible] dell Willkie.

[illegible] White. White was a longtime Republican [illegible] the [illegible] despoil our political landscape—and,

sessed the hedgehog's knowledge of
opened up in the American party system. The old machines and kingmakers were in decline, while the
in place. If you could flood enough precinct caucuses with true believers in parliamentary procedure and willing to shout down any opposition—you could elect enough delegates to control the district caucuses. Control enough district caucuses, and you had the state delegation, and so on to San Francisco.

working largely in secrecy, so as not to alert the fading cabal—White did just that, building the far right's first national political apparatus. The race was all over before it began. To their dismay, the other leading candidates discovered that it didn't matter how many primaries they won or how good they looked in the polls. Goldwater's men controlled the state caucuses, where the vast majority of delegates were still selected.

All of this makes for a fascinating story of political trench warfare (albeit one told before, by Theodore White in his *The Making of the President 1964* and by Clif White in his own campaign memoirs), and Perlstein's narrative is understandably engrossed in it. Yet the story is not so much one of a mass democratic movement as of something akin to a

As Perlstein himself admits, once the television lights were flipped on and America got a good look at what Clif White had wrought, it was horrified. The convention was a zoo, stuffed with John Birchers, Minutemen, Young Americans for Freedom, and the rest of the right-wing menagerie. They occupied themselves chasing newsmen and party dissenters, physically, from the hall
fore a prime-time audience—when he tried to submit a party plank condemning "extremism."

By the time it was all over, polls showed that Goldwater had the support of less than one fifth of the nation's voters, and many GOP candidates spent the election season running as far from the national ticket as they could. In November the great right-wing hope was trounced by Lyndon Johnson (61–39 percent), and Republicans everywhere suffered devastating losses. By the end of 1964 some 53 percent of Americans polled considered themselves Democrats, as opposed to only 25 percent who identified with Republicans.

Why, then, could Barry Goldwater not considered, say, the George McGovern of the Republican Party? Perlstein offers several technical explanations that soon test both our credulity and our common sense. The debacle in the New Hampshire primary, for instance, is attributed to the untimely release of Stanley Kubrick's wicked nuclear-war satire, *Dr. Strangelove*. About this time, remember, Goldwater was voicing his belief that battlefield nuclear weapons could be entrusted to area commanders—and that they should be used to "defoliate" the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Vietnam.

"Attentive viewers couldn't fail to understand that Kubrick was satirizing an entire system, not any of the system's cogs," Perlstein is helpful enough to explain. "But most viewers were not attentive. Americans prefer to isolate villains who despoil a preexisting innocence, rather than admit that there might not have been any innocence there in the first place."

Those inattentive Americans, unable to understand *Dr. Strangelove*! This sort of condescension pervades Perlstein's analysis. Elsewhere, a crowd in Detroit's Cadillac Square is described as "sturdy proletarians," while viewers of a Goldwater holiday telecast are described as "the folks watching at home, lazy, fat, and overcontent from too much Memorial Day bratwurst and beer."

Perlstein suggests that the sturdy proles still might have been won over had Goldwater not shunted Clif White aside for the general election campaign. He presents no hard evidence for this; objectively, getting 39 percent of the vote when your candidate had been garnering less than 20 percent after his own c
vention (as the team that repla
White managed to do) might
considered a feat. But White,
see, had plans to exploit America
lowest fears through a lurid film t
featured clips of pornography and
oting urban blacks. (Apparen
moviegoers' attention spans had
proved between March and Nove
ber.) And surely, Perlstein impl
White would have better exploi
the arrest of one of Johnson's ai
for making a pass at another man
a Washington, D.C., rest room.

We can all be sorry we missed
on that campaign. Still, this does
quite a mass political moveme
make. In fact, the voices of any c
servative foot soldiers soon beco
conspicuous in their absence. I
typical passage, Perlstein writes t
true believers at the San Franci
convention "would have been al
gether disgusted by the goings-on
the Haight" or "might have be
amused," and that "some might ha
taken in the country's first topl
dancing act." But we never do qu
hear what they did or did not
(though we are assured "it was th
Woodstock"). The lack of such
rect accounts helps to reinforce t
impression that the Goldwater ca
paign, like so many other aspects
the conservative movement, was
affair run first and foremost from t
top down.

Nor does it help that Perlstein
sorts to one shoddy distortion after a
other to hold this impression
We are told that by 1961, three ye
after its inception, the John Birch S
ciety "had 20,000 members . . .
60,000, or 100,000"—yet we nev
learn that the organization was mo
bund before the end of the decade,
that the average American was abo
as likely to know a member of the N
tion of Islam as to know a Bircher. W
are eagerly informed that Young Am
icans for Freedom (YAF), the righ
wing youth movement founded
William Buckley's estate, "won 5,4
new recruits in the summer of 196
compared to [the left-wing] SDS's t
tal membership of 1,500." But Per
stein doesn't mention that within a
other four years Students for
Democratic Society was flourishing

puses all over the country, while
AM had devolved into the curious
of personality it remains to this

gain and again, we are told that
hot new right-wing book is "a
seller," or "was flying off the
ves by the tens of thousands," or
sold enough copies to supply
out of every ten men, women,
children in the country" — only
ave Perlstein admit, a few pages
few paragraphs later, that "there
ys was another Birchite million-
willing to spring for a lot of a
thousand more [books] to sprin-
around like so many Gideon
les." Again and again, he feels
need to impress us with how
ny millionaires were called upon
help fuel this supposedly mass
ocratic movement, from Buckley
lenry Regnery to H. L. Hunt to a
ng Richard Mellon Scaife. (Oh,
Richard Mellon Scaife ever truly
ng!)

ike the hellish legions *Macbeth*'s
rd sisters would summon, Perl-
n's right-wing masses somehow
er quite materialized. Rather
n demonstrate how Goldwater's
astrophic defeat created new Re-
lican voters, Perlstein simply
gles certain politicians near the
of *Before the Storm*, like a Q.E.D.
re is George Wallace—much
e the real father of the modern
erican right than Barry Goldwa-
ever was. Yet even Wallace, run-
g for president under optimum
ditions in 1968, when it seemed
f America were coming apart at
seams, was able to garner only 13
ent of the popular vote and did
carry a single state outside of the
p South. Richard Nixon, who
win in 1968, was forced to spend
h of his term expanding the so-
welfare state, creating the Envi-
mental Protection Agency, and
mitting an idea for a national
nteed income to Congress.

hen there is Reagan. Perlstein
kes much of Ronnie's political
ring out in 1964, including a
ech in the closing days of the
paign, broadcast over national
vision. The speech is often re-
ed to in conservative circles
ere it is known simply as "The Speech" — yet it is almost never quoted. It is stuffed full of Reagan's usual amiable lies and tall tales, but the bigger problem seems to be that it is also full of ideas the right was not keen to bring up again after Goldwater's campaign, such as slashing attacks on Social Security, the Tennessee Valley Authority, farm subsidies, and even some veterans' benefits.

Yes, Reagan was able to win election as governor of California in 1966—where he rarely dared to assault his state's extensive social-welfare system with anything more than words. Trying to run for president as a fire-breathing conservative again in 1976, he could not oust an unelected, moderate Republican incumbent who had become a national laughingstock. In 1980, Reagan still claimed less than 51 percent of the popular vote against Jimmy Carter, and the evidence strongly suggests that he was one rescue-helicopter engine away from becoming a genial footnote to history. Once in office, President Reagan's conservatism consisted of little more than—as George Will characterized it—conserving the essentials of the New Deal.

Even in their greatest moments of triumph, conservative politicians have rarely been emboldened to enact much of the right-wing agenda. This is in part because that agenda is based upon the airiest of fantasies, but mostly because conservative movements have simply never drawn the sort of sustained mass participation that marked the civil-rights, environmental, women's, gay-rights, labor, or antinuclear movements. The closest they have come is the anti-abortion movement, and even here, after a few mass demonstrations, their numbers melted away without making a dent in America's support for legal abortion. Instead, their work was largely done for them by a small handful of the faithful, whose campaign of terror—assassinating physicians and firebombing clinics—has effectively expunged a woman's right to choose in most parts of the country.

This is hardly surprising, since the American right has, in fact, battened on nearly every antidemocratic development of the past four decades, from "white backlash" and the illegal, undeclared war in Vietnam right through the sabotage of the 2000 presidential election by way of mob violence, racial manipulation of the voting rolls, and a partisan judiciary. Unable to sustain a mass base, the right has had to rely on all that limits mass participation, on everything that divides, alienates, and disqualifies voters—on the constant denigration of government itself as a somehow illegitimate entity, a malevolent intrusion into people's lives.

It's little wonder, then, that Perlstein constantly refers to rightist "cadres," or that Clif White actively modeled his Goldwater campaign on Communist archetypes of organization and strategy. Perlstein even tries to confer some sort of bizarre validation upon the right by noting how many former Communists became ardent conservatives, or how comfortable young conservatives were "joining members of the Young People's Socialist League in rousing choruses of radical songs." But why not? Both sides put a premium on tactics such as "burrowing from within," massive propaganda that adheres to a strict party line, and the promotion of anything that creates contempt for the prevailing order. Both share a fundamentally infantile, messianic worldview and reserve their greatest contempt for liberalism — as does the author.

Perlstein writes of the "liberal consensus" the way that undergraduates in the 1960s spoke knowingly of the Establishment, or that today's undergraduates speak of *The Matrix*. Alternately referred to as "The Story," the consensus is an oppressive, homogenizing monolith, made up of the government, the military, big business, labor, and the media.

The consensus [illegible] everything, even the crudest fantasies of its opponents, such as a fleeting rumor that "African Negro troops, who are cannibals' . . . , were secretly [illegible] swamps under the command of a

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Russian colonel for a U.N. mar
law takeover of the United Sta
Back in Mr. Rogers mode, Perls
explains that

> In America citizens are charged
> making them aware of the w
> around them. But they were ret
> the information to them by Cold
> secrecy. So they did what they c
> with the facts available. Secret a
> trained in out of the way forests
> try to rule over countries, we
> mad at the Face of Ego.

Elsewhere, a reader of *Before the Storm* might well conclude that
employment was rampant in Am
ca in the 1960s—when in fact it
negligible—or, thanks to Perlste
combing of back-page fillers
tabloid headlines, that the nat
was a raging cauldron of random
lence, psychosis, and discontent.

Much more disturbing, though
the odious moral neutralism t
Perlstein affects in order to deb
the consensus. Often his
rhetoric is indistinguishable fr
that to be found in the *National*
view. In the world of Rick Perlst
no conservative has ever lost a
bate, on any subject; few are e
less than brilliant and charming;
almost none ever makes anyth
less than a scintillating speech t
instantly brings hordes of those s
dy proles ("S.P.'s"?) to their si
Meanwhile, the word "liberal" is
most never used without the mod
er "smug" in front of it; liberals c
stantly "sputter," "simper," and
"patronizing"—when they are
certainable.

"In a clinical sense, Johnso
paranoia and bipolar tendencies
spoke for worse mental health th
Goldwater's," Dr. Perlstein into
us, referring to rumors floated in
early sixties that Goldwater had
fered two mental breakdowns e
in his career. The more racist a
militarist sentiments of right-wi
leaders are constantly downplay
while leading liberals are pillori
for lesser offenses. Perlstein inst
for example, that Goldwater's n
memorable tag line from his acceptan
speech in San Francisco—*I wo
remind you that extremism in the
defense of liberty is no vice! A
I say to you also that moderat

ıe pursuit of justice is no virtue!"—
lly differed in tone from Presi-
t Kennedy's vaunted inaugural
ress: "We shall pay any price,
any burden, meet any hardship,
ort any friend, oppose any foe,
ssure the survival and the success
berty."

lonsense. Liberty and justice are
heir very definition anathema to
tremism"; they are impossible
iout "sacrifice." Yet Perlstein is
ermined to legitimize the right.
refers repeatedly to a woman
ı a pro-Goldwater button who
ame the Rosa Parks of the San
ıcisco streetcars when she flam-
antly defied the unwritten rule
nst women standing on the run-
g boards and caused such a distur-
ce that she ended up getting ar-
ed"—a repugnant comparison,
one that serves only to suggest
t Perlstein has not the least un-
standing of what either Parks or
civil-rights movement was all
ut.

lsewhere he writes of how "more
more Americans, in fact, were
inning to look at politics as Mar-
Luther King did—and as Barry
ldwater, Michael Harrington,
hel Carson, James Baldwin, and
ty Friedan did—as a theater of
rality, of absolutes." But except
Goldwater, none of the above in-
iduals celebrated "absolutes"! If
thing, they stood squarely in the
ıddle of the liberal, reformist tradi-
ı, fighting for such highly practi-
things as guaranteeing full citi-
ship for women and African
ıericans, reducing poverty, and
ning DDT.

One has the feeling that Perl-
stein does not have a good
grip on the era, particularly
his insistence on the whole idea
"the liberal consensus" in the first
ce. For proof, Perlstein offers
stly clips from period editorials
l columnists and the stump
eches of politicians. This is the
torical equivalent of proving the
stence of the yeti by paying Ti-
an peasants to show you its drop-
gs. Insisting on the unity of the
ıerican people is a wish that
iticians and editorial writers like
to throw up into the ozone periodically, and you could as easily collect like quotes from any era in American history.

There was indeed a general liberal ascendancy from 1932 to 1980 or so, but it was never uncontested or all powerful—never a consensus. Throughout this period, liberalism was under constant assault—from plutocrats pouring money into anti-union drives and conservative campaign coffers; from reactionary southern and Republican congressmen blocking most progressive and civil-rights legislation; from red-baiters and professional moralizers; from the three quarters of the nation's newspapers that backed the more conservative candidate in nearly every presidential election.

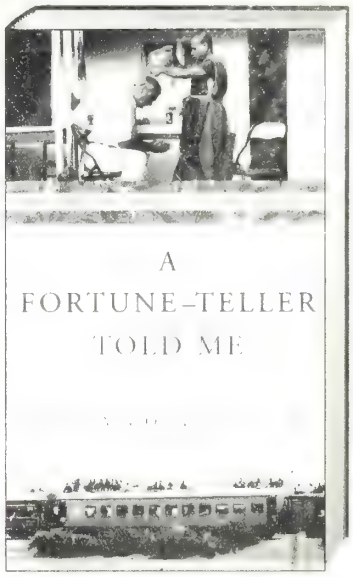
In short, very much the political landscape that Perlstein describes as coming into being sometime around 1964. Key parts of the consensus keep coming off under his pen like, well, like petals on a daisy. The conservative movement rose for years on the cash of one corporate millionaire after another (so much for the business end of the consensus), generals urged nuclear war (there goes the military), and we hear of "Barry Goldwater's nine-year string of good press" and syndicated newspaper column (so much for the press).

Describing the Kennedy Administration's proposal of what would become the Civil Rights Act in the wake of the Birmingham protest movement, Perlstein writes:

> In their conclusions the White House perceived a constellation of unspoken assumptions about race relations—about social relations—in the United States: introduce bold legislation and the troublemakers would quit, like kidnappers who had been paid their ransom. Theirs was an almost desperate belief that America was by definition a placid place, if only "extremists" could be kept in check. That didn't just mean the racists who perpetrated the violence. But also those who "disturbed the peace" on the other side by *protesting* racism.

But it is really Perlstein who is being naive here. These are the mechanics of democracies and their leaders—we push them, and they

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—Ryszard Kapuściński, author of *The Emperor* and [illegible]

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[illegible]

pull us. It is highly unlikely that the consensus historians characterized America as "a placid place," but they were certainly trying to use federal power to push the nation to give black Americans what they wanted. Of course they were trying to promote harmony and prosperity. What else should they have done? Passed out arms? Ignored the whole mess?

The great story of the 1960s remains what liberalism accomplished. America became the first major state in modern history to guarantee the full citizenship of a sizable racial minority. And its civilian leaders successfully resisted the repeated, urgent appeals of its military chiefs to launch a "preemptive" war of mass destruction.

If you don't think that's so much, consider what a Goldwater administration might have been like, with its intimate ties to racist southern whites; its support for using nukes in Vietnam and invading Cuba; its stated determination to resume above-ground nuclear testing—and, not least, its adoration of those same trigger-happy generals. (Here's Goldwater in 1963, before something called the Military Order of the World Wars: "I say fear the civilians. They're taking over.")

Perlstein has turned history on its head, but not as he thinks. "The consensus" and "The Story" are what hold sway now, not what held sway in the 1960s. *That* America was a place where a generation of liberal victories had produced a nation open and secure enough to throw up a Barry Goldwater—and to refute him soundly. The apogee of the liberal epoch marked a brilliant flowering of cultural and political diversity, in which all sorts of views were entertained and debated, however raucously. If you turned on [illegible] in the 1960s, even with a mere three channels—you might have seen anyone from [illegible] to the Communist Party, from Michael Harrington to Milton Friedman.

Quite a contrast to the imposed culture we have today. Perlstein, who is a contributor to *The Nation*, has made it clear that he would like to use *Before the Storm* as a rallying cry for the left—that the triumph of the conservatives after Goldwater should be no different from the Democrats being able, in just a few short years, to elect a leader

> whose positions included halving the military budget, socializing the medical system, reregulating the communications and electrical industries, establishing a guaranteed minimum income for all Americans, and equalizing funding for all schools regardless of property valuations—and who promised to fire Alan Greenspan, counseled withdrawal from the World Trade Organization, and, for good measure, spoke warmly of adolescent sexual experimentation.

What he does not seem to understand is that majorities of Americans support many of those positions now, at least according to opinion polls, and it doesn't matter. For the triumph of the right has not been the triumph of some mass democratic movement but the triumph of Old White—elite, privately financed cadres, adroit enough to discourage or ignore what most people think.

There is no figure in *Before the Storm*—no segregationist, no missile-rattler—who draws the opprobrium of Perlstein so consistently as Lyndon Johnson, the rough beast of democracy himself. No doubt his corrupt old hide deserves most of this tanning, and yet, in the context of our present politics, he comes off as an almost beguiling figure. He was a man who had no illusions about the rough-and-tumble of politics, who had lived on the most unsavory sides of democracy and could still summon up an inspiring vision of what America ought to be.

It may be that, by 1966, Johnson could not get a rodent-control bill passed, but that this somehow defined his presidency is merely another of Perlstein's distortions. Even as a widely hated lame duck in 1968, Johnson was able to get the Fair Housing Act into law—a piece of crucial civil-rights legislation that has saved us untold strife and litigation ever since. Like so [illegible] else of Johnson's Great Society agenda that Perlstein finds hu[illegible]tic, it was an eminently practical and successful answer to a pressing social problem.

Johnson's best moment undoubtedly came one evening during the 1964 campaign, which Perlstein recounts. Despite a storm of invective and death threats, directed at [illegible] himself and his wife, Johnson insisted on traveling to the heart of the white South and bearding his co-trymen in their den. "All these years they have kept their foot on our necks by appealing to our animosities, and dividing us," he said, performing a hostile New Orleans audience to its face that he would enforce the new civil-rights laws. "My poor old state, they have never heard a Democratic speech in their years. All they ever hear at election time is, 'Nigger! Nigger! Nigger!'"

Perlstein treats this with typical contempt—"[Johnson] wanted a mandate"—but it is impossible to conceive of any American politician today displaying such courage and such candor. Far from engaging in the sort of denial that Perlstein insists was so characteristic of the consensus," here was Johnson charging straight at a problem, telling his fellow citizens an ugly truth about themselves while trying to invoke the better angels of their nature.

Today, of course, no politician would ever use the "n-word." He would merely, say, hire a private firm to expunge thousands of black voters from the voting rolls, while reminding us at every opportunity how strongly he believed in the ideal of "diversity." This sort of doublespeak is now standard procedure. Never in American history has politics been more irrelevant, ideas so unimportant, and our democracy more of a shadow play staged by entrenched corporate interests. Far from unmaking the American consensus, as Perlstein's subtitle would have it, the passing of the liberal idea and the triumph, by default, of the right has forced an unprecedented consensus upon us—one in which we will cavil at a bad word but swallow whole any deed.

THE QUALITY LIT GAME

emembering Terry Southern

y George Plimpton

ussed in this essay

in and Guts: The Art and Life of Terry Southern, by Lee Hill. HarperCollins, 001. 343 pages. $30.

Dig This: The Unspeakable Writings of Terry Southern, edited by Nile Southern and Josh Alan Friedman. Grove Press, 2001. 263 pages. $25.



n my bachelor days, Terry Southern often stayed in my apartment in New k, usually when I was e out often when I n't. Sometimes he called n I was in a hotel room he West Coast to tell in his manner, that all well. A party was inably going on. I could the chink of glasses, a nt piano, and laughter he background. Other s he would forget when s actually in town, and come home from the li- y or a dinner party to find friends seated on the , lighted candles on the board, someone playing guitar. Once, late at t, when I arrived with n my arm, I opened the tment door to find the l crowd and Terry at the rols of a movie projector. was showing a blue ie (as they were called e time). He had taken n a framed poster, and film was showing on the bare wall. d just a glimpse of a naked man in k stockings and a mask approach- woman on a bed, similarly attired was the norm in the X-rated films of the day), before Terry held his hand over the muzzle of the projector to block my view—too late.

I can't recall the aftermath of all this. To impress the girl, I suspect I put on an air of being properly indignant. I have the vague impression of Terry's guests, many of them my friends, sloping out of the apartment.

I had known Terry since the early fifties, the start-up days of the *Paris Review*. Along with many other American veterans, he had taken advantage of the G.I. Bill of Rights and was in Paris to study at the Sorbonne. Almost everyone took *Civilisation Française*, which the university authorities had set up, one felt, in gratitude for American assistance in the liberation of their country. Attendance was not taken, nor were exams given.

Terry spent four years in Paris, many of his waking hours in the cafés, and especially the jazz clubs, on the Left Bank. At that point, soon after the war, Paris was a kind of culture dish for writers beginning their careers. It was outlandishly inexpensive, possible to get by on thirty dollars or so a week. And, of course, the lure of the city had something to do with it—the literary crop on hand included, among others, Richard Wright, Jimmy Baldwin, William Styron, Peter Matthiessen, Evan S. Connell, James Salter, Mary Lee Settle, Alice Adams, and Mordecai Richler.

And Terry Southern. I probably met him in the Old Navy, a closet-sized bistro off the Boulevard Saint-Germain, and surely at the Café de Flore near the Jardin du Luxembourg, where the *Paris Review* people tended to hang out. Terry was slim, quite shy, I thought, but with an easy grace at making friends—soft-spoken, courtly, rather owlish (indeed, for a time he kept a small caged owl in his rented room). I remember him particularly for his manner of speech. Although he was born in Texas (a cotton-crop town named Alvarado), he affected a cutting, mock-British gentry way of [illegible] complete with [illegible] ("What? *What?*") delivered in fits and starts, with words often alliterated in hipster style ("fab" for fabulous), and marked with [illegible] such as "Big Billy Faulk" for William Faulkner [illegible] movie director [illegible] speed [illegible] (I once wrote) Goofy's, if that Disney character [illegible]. He's

ge Plimpton is the author of a number of s, including Paper Lion, Shadow Box, *the novel* The Curious Case of Sidd h. *He is the editor of the* Paris Review.

stylistic oddities turned up in Terry's prose in the formal train [illegible] exclamation points - obvious precursors of Tom Wolfe's [illegible]

The [illegible] the appearance of two welcome new Terry Southern books, one about him and the other by him. The first, a biography by Lee Hill entitled *A Grand Guy: The Art and Life of Terry Southern*, is a labor of ten years' work, years well spent in that Hill has filled in much of the background to Southern's career, parts of which have always remained shadowy even to his friends. *A Grand Guy* provides a unique portrait not only of a somewhat self-doomed writer but of the various cultures—Hollywood in particular—that exacerbated his problems. Hill is a Canadian journalist who had the benefit of knowing Southern for five years, so that pertinent interviews and reminiscences appear throughout the book.

The second of these titles, *Now Dig This*, is a wild, utterly diverse collection put together by Terry's son, Nile, and Josh Alan Friedman. At the very least, it shows the wide range of Terry's targets, none of them treated with any reverence whatsoever. Typical is a satirical letter to the editor of Ms. magazine, in which he argues that women will never gain equal rights until they quit making animalistic noises in bed. Throughout the collection, his prose displays the qualities best summed up by Norman Mailer: "clean, mean, coolly deliberate, and murderous."

The first piece of fiction I saw of his was, as it happened, instrumental in the birth of the *Paris Review*—a short story (actually a section of his first novel, *Flash and Filigree*) that persuaded Peter Matthiessen and Harold L. Humes to scrap the Paris Review's [illegible] and start a purely literary magazine. They asked me to come over from Cambridge University after graduation to help out. Terry's story, entitled "The Accident," was published in the magazine's first issue (Spring 1953), and it caused no end of trouble. The story contained the word "shit," this in a sentence in which a police officer is trying to calm down an irate motorist: "Don't get excited."

[illegible] fifties, U.S. Customs inspected magazines and books printed abroad with extraordinary care, page by page, looking for words of the four-letter variety that could get the whole lot confiscated and indeed burned on a city dump. Customs officials rummaged through shirt fronts looking for the distinctive pale green covers of the Olympia Press "Traveller's Companion" series (Henry Miller's *Plexus*, Pauline Réage's *Story of O*, Nabokov's *Lolita*) and plucking them forth as if worms from a salad.

The man in charge of the customs operations in New York was a Mr. Demcy, and on a number of occasions in the fifties I went down to his office on Varick Street to discuss the incoming shipments of the *Paris Review*. We often discussed the magazine's readership. My concept was that a typical reader was a retired English professor living in a snowbound cabin in the mountains of Vermont, whose work had been rejected by the magazine, and whose contempt for what he was reading in its most recent pages would surely cause him to toss the thing into the Franklin stove. Mr. Demcy, on the other hand, pictured a typical subscriber as a family man, surrounded by the accoutrements of a suburban country home—children underfoot, a large dog. It was his belief that an inquisitive preteen (what Mr. Demcy referred to as a "susceptible reader") would inevitably pick up a copy of the *Paris Review* and discover a word quite new to him or her. "Dad, what does this mean?"—this simple question to the wrong family into confusion, despair, and revulsion.

Given such a restrictive climate (it went on until the late fifties, when the censorship codes began to weaken), one can understand the soul-searching that went on over the s-word in Terry's "The Accident." Eventually the word "crap" was substituted for "shit," and finally, at the last—and I blush to admit as much—I took out the word "crap," which resulted in the utterly bland phrase, particularly from the mouth of an arresting officer in Texas, "Don't get hot."

Terry was quite properly incensed. He stormed into our little office on the Rue Garancière and demanded that we publish a wordy document of apology and explanation that would have taken up a third of the magazine. Finally, to placate him, an erratum notice was published (it was written by Peter Matthiessen), which read:

> Terry Southern's most [illegible] the *Paris Review* point out the absence of two words from his story, "The Accident" (issue one): The sentence "Don't get hot" should have read "Don't get your crap hot," an omission for which we apologize to all concerned.

In Paris the only release from such restrictions was to give up any thought of moral virtue and write for Maurice Girodias, the publisher of the Olympia Press. He paid up to $1,000 for an Ollendorff (short for "dirty books")—an enormous sum in those days, surely enough to sustain anyone living in meager quarters on the Left Bank for a year or not longer. I tried one, based loosely on Robert Louis Stevenson's story "The Suicide Club," about a group of adventurers, bored with life, who decide to do away with one another in elaborate games of murder played out in a castle. In my version the castle was overrun with women, and the crimes were sexual and macabre. The girl whom I was in love at the time burst into tears when she read the opening chapters. Girodias looked at me coldly when he handed the manuscript back across his desk. Terry was amused to the point of little *tsk tsks* of mock dismay ("What! What? Not quite got the *hang* of it, eh, old chap?").

He was beginning to work on his own db at the time, a short novel ("de luxe porn") entitled *Candy*, surely one of the more notorious examples of the genre. Its main character, vaguely based on Voltaire's Candide, is an impressionable young girl, pert (one of Terry's favorite words), innocent, who gives herself over to a psychotic hunchback. "Give me your hump!"—a line from the book—was a form of greeting often heard around the cafés for a while. The orgasm scene in *Candy* has her bereft with lust: "'Fuck! Shit! Piss!' she screamed. 'Cunt! Cock! Crap! Prick! Kike! Nigger! Wop! *Hump!* HUMP!"

One can imagine the effect this extraordinary sentence had on Mr. Demcy of the U.S. Customs.

While Terry was working on the drafts of *Candy* he asked a friend, a young ex-G.I. named Mason Hoffenberg,

g, a copy editor at the Agence
ce-Presse, who had written two
s for Girodias—*Sin for Breakfast*
Hamilton Drake) and *Until She*
ms (as Eustace Perez)—to help
h *Candy*. Working together (Hof-
erg was responsible for a number of
book's odd characters, including
Krankheit, the author of the Wil
n Reich–like manifesto, *Masturba-*
Now!), the pair finished their man
pt in 1958 and chose the arty name
xwell Kenton" as the author (it
thought best to disguise one's name
se of future fame). *Candy* appeared
October, number 64 in the Trav-
's Companion series. It caused a
iderable stir. Indeed, the Paris vice
d stepped in and banned it, which
ered Girodias not a whit: two
ths later *Candy* appeared with a
title, *Lollipop*, which, for some rea-
escaped the vice squad's notice.
With the relaxation of the obscen
aws in the United States, *Candy*
eventually published by G. P. Put
, both authors using their real
es. Terry once told me that *Can-*
ad sold more than 5 million copies.
publishing records show that it
about 140,000 copies in 1964
e; it reached number two on the
n best-seller list, after John le Car-
Spy Who Came In from the Cold.
use of loopholes in the copyright
, pirated editions, and utter con-
n as to the book's legal status, Ter-
ade very little money from its suc-
—not substantially more than the
He was originally paid by Girodias.
don't remember Terry talking
h about *Candy* in those early
—perhaps a rueful smile when a
d would catch sight of him at a
and call out, "Give me your
p!" Of far more concern to him
his work in what he famously re-
d to as the "Quality Lit Game."
and Filigree, though turned down
ore than a score of American pub-
rs, was finally published in England
ndre Deutsch. It caught the at-
on of the British novelist Henry
n, who pronounced it (in the *Ob-*
r) "the novel of the year"—more
welcome news to Terry, who had
me obsessed with Green's novels,
with its one-word title: *Doting*,
ght, *Loving*, *Back*, *Concluding*. He
e Green a fan letter, which to his
surprise was answered; a correspondence ensued, and the two eventually met in London, the start of a long friendship.

Terry interviewed Henry Green for the *Paris Review* (the result is included in *Now Dr. This*). Two of Green's responses were especially meaningful to Terry; or, more likely, they reinforced his own views. One was Green's response on being asked about the role of humor in the novel: "Surely the artist must entertain," he said. "And one's in a very bad way indeed if one can't laugh. Laughter relaxes the characters in a novel. And if you *can* make the reader laugh he is apt to get careless and go on reading."

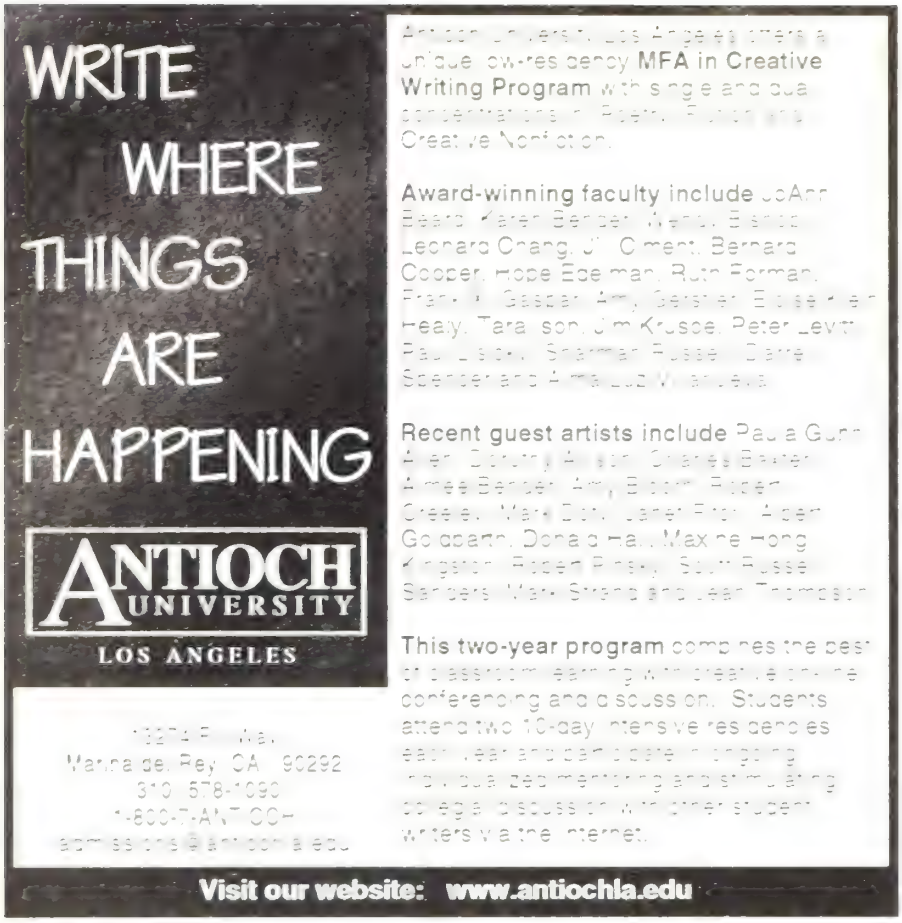
The other was in reply to a question about films. Green's comment was that the "novelist is a communicator and must therefore be interested in any form of communication." Since the consensus at the time among most serious writers was that working in any way with television or the movies was "selling out," it must have startled Terry that Green thought otherwise.

The mid-fifties and sixties were a pivotal time for Terry. He moved back to New York. In 1956 he married a young painter named Carol Eastman, who was studying for an M.A. in early childhood education. They lived for a while (when he wasn't hanging out in my place) on a barge based in Far Rockaway. Terry's work began to appear in major magazines—*Esquire*, the *Paris Review*, *Odyssey*, *The New York Times Book Review*. From 1960 to 1962 he wrote reviews and opinion pieces for *The Nation*, among them prescient evaluations of the work of Henry Miller, William S. Burroughs, John Barth, Harry Mathews, Peter Matthiessen, and Kurt Vonnegut. The giddier side of his aesthetic appeared in the anticultural *Realist*, quirky, highly salacious contributions with titles like "Scandale at the Dumpling Shop," a story that featured toy dolls outfitted with "teeny tampons." He became a regular with the artistic and literary crowds—the Beats in particular—and an increasingly high-ranking personage in his self-named Quality Lit Game. He bought a farm in East Canaan, Connecticut. Carol had a son, whom they named Nile. *Candy* was in print. A new novel, *The Magic Christian*, had been accepted by Knopf. The book was about a multimillionaire, Guy Grand, whose pleasure in life is to use his millions to outrage the decorum "making it hot for them." His pranks include bringing a howitzer along on a big-game hunt, entering a panther in a dog show, bribing (for a million dollars, tax-free) an actress to depart from the text and address the live television audience: "Anyone who would allow this slobbering pomp and drivel in his home has less sense and taste than the beasts of the field."

The actor Peter Sellers, delighted with the lunacy of the book, bought one hundred copies of *The Magic Christian*, one of which he gave to Stanley Kubrick, who was then about to begin filming *Dr. Strangelove*. The script at that point was loosely based on Peter George's novel *Red Alert*, a melodrama about the destruction of the world when a crazed commander dispatches a flight of nuclear bombers to obliterate the Soviet Union. According to Terry, Kubrick woke up one morning and realized that the destruction of the world could not be treated "in any conventionally dramatic fashion," and could only see it as a hideous joke. Because he liked the humor of *The Magic Christian*, he hired Terry to transform the film from melodrama into black comedy. I remember the telegram inviting Terry to London. It arrived at my house, where he was staying in one of his periodic exits. He departed for me at the height of preparations. Weeks in London, a place Terry referred to as "Old Smoke."

Terry's decision to leave for London and the movies happened much as he described it in his memoir. It was made—like most moves of that kind—largely because of financial need: a family to support with hardly a sufficient income from serious writing to do so. And it had Henry Green's blessing.

He turned out to be remarkably good at it. His ear for dialogue, his sense of comedy, the comic artist's skill, the dialogue should be and yet invariably is—the precision and complexity of communication that he and Green [illegible]. Terry often referred to his screen-writing as "[illegible]"


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Strangelove became a great hit, with its success Terry became ly sought after. He brought his ghtening and tightening" techgs to William Wyler's *The Collect* a film adaptation of Evelyn gh's *The Loved One*; film scripts for ly and *The Magic Christian*, *The* nnati Kid, a Western called *Some* Else Casino Royale Barbarella, g many others. And, of course, *Rider*.

erry was always very bitter about xperience with *Easy Rider*, the fas biker film starring Dennis Hopfind Peter Fonda, which brought Nicholson out of obscurity igh his portrayal of the recovering holic ACLU lawyer George Han-The film was made on such a shoeg, with so little hope of financial n, that Terry took no more notice ossible profit than he did of bustaffairs in general. For a film that e, according to Terry, more than million, he was paid only $3,900, residuals rarely amounting to than $100 a year. Particularly ng was Dennis Hopper's con- on that Southern's contribution minimal—a view somewhat disved by a court case in which Terwas able to produce an original script Hopper was not.

ill, the success of *Easy Rider* made a familiar figure in Hollywood es, especially in the cool, hip d beginning to influence the film ure; he relished their acceptance, of course they were delighted to him around. He was always very d of being included in the famous collage used for the cover of the les' *Sgt. Pepper* album, in which band members are flanked by a ber of cult figures—living and —thought to be representative of xties. Terry is tucked into a group Oscar Wilde, Lenny Bruce, and r Allan Poe. He peeks out from ng the others, wearing a pair of es, the only one on the cover so pped. In a sense it is an almost unvably appropriate grouping, coning that Terry had a Wildean c slant on manners, the acidity black humor of a Lenny Bruce, as for Poe, he was an early influ- Terry's mother gave him a copy e's novel *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* when he was nine. "It was an extraordinary turn-on for a young Western lout," Terry said in an interview that appears in *A Grand Guy*. "Nine years old, and I was already hooked on weirdo lit. But in the best possible way, because if pot leads to cocaine, E. A. Poe surely leads to Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Lautréamont, Joyce, Kafka, Céline, Faulkner, Nathanael West, Sartre, et cetera, et cetera, ad gloriam."

No sooner had Terry discovered Poe than he started rewriting the author's stories and, as he put it, "taking them further"—substituting the names of schoolmates for Poe's characters and subjecting them to outlandish experiences, "gross weird."

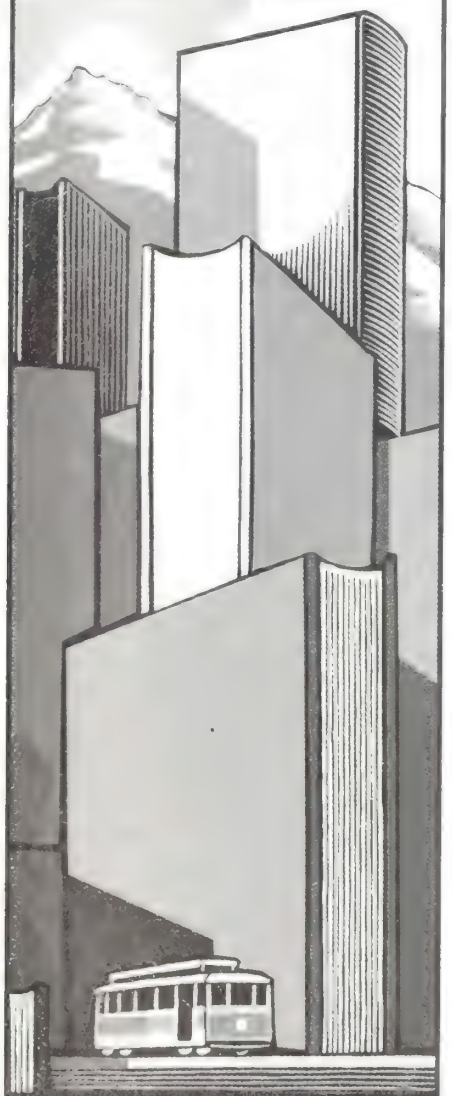
His notion of "taking it further" crops up in any number of his collaborations. He wrote a sequence in the movie *The Loved One* that is not in the novel but that he thought faithful to Waugh's intentions—a relationship between the Whispering Glades cemetery and NASA that allowed the remains of the deceased to be shot into space in a rocket. Jonathan Winters is the star of the weird launch scene, in which, as an entrepreneur in the funeral business, he shouts the countdown into a public address system: "...4,3,2,1 *Resurrection Now!!*"

During his Hollywood years, Terry did only the occasional magazine piece, in particular a famous *Esquire* report on the Democratic Convention in Chicago in 1968, which he covered with William Burroughs and Jean Genet. But there was little else. In the late seventies he tried to link the two vocations of screen- and novel-writing with a book entitled *Blue Movie*. His idea was not only that *Blue Movie* would become a best-seller but that the movie made from it would mark a huge step forward in the film industry by being the first "full-on erection-and-penetration movie using big-name stars."

The novel, which The World Publishing Co. brought out in 1970, was not a success, many critics dismissing it as a recycling of *Candy*. The *New York Times* refused to print ads for it at all. Terry told me wryly that he'd heard Mrs. Bennett Cerf had thrown the manuscript into the fire. Actually, the *film* very nearly got made. John Calley, an adventuresome producer at Warner Brothers (he had produced *The Loved One*) and later the president of United Artists, was especially enthusiastic. He kept announcing, "It'll be like *Gone with the Wind!*" Mike Nichols was to direct, and somehow Julie Andrews, the star of *Mary Poppins*, among other wholesome vehicles, had been persuaded to play the girl. I remember staring at Terry when I heard this. "Julie Andrews?"

In the eighties everything began to go sour for Terry. A divorce. The script-writing, though he kept at it, never reached the production stage. His brand of humor no longer seemed in vogue. He had a serious problem with drugs and alcohol and the fast company he was keeping. He found himself in terrible financial straits, brought on by his years of living so far beyond his means that it almost seemed as if he was trying to emulate his character Guy Grand. His problems were compounded by a string of years when he didn't pay any taxes. At one point he was so strapped for cash that he walked into the offices of *The National Lampoon* and offered to write anything for $100 a shot. The editors (for whom he was an icon) paid him substantially more for his efforts; as usual, many pieces were based on bizarre sexual practices, boasting such titles as "Hard-Corpse Pornography," "Puritan Porn," and "Strange Sex We Have Known"—this last a collaborative work with William Burroughs. Finally, his health began to go. A stroke.

In September 1994, Terry received the Gotham Writer Award, a prestigious honor bestowed by the Independent Feature Project at an annual affair, held that year at New York's Roseland Ballroom. I had the pleasure of introducing him to a crowd that roared its welcome as he stepped slowly up onto a small temporary stage. He was heavy then—dissipation [illegible] en its toll (he had "overcooked," as one artist friend put it)—and he pushed himself up the steps with a cane. I don't recall that he said more than a sentence or two before turning away from the microphone. But what happened next was appropriate: on a big screen above him the lines he had

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written for Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* spoke for him: the scene in the War Room. When the scuffling started, the audience roared at the famous line: "Gentlemen, you can't fight in here. This is the War Room!"

He died not long after, at the age of seventy-one. He had begun teaching a screen-writing course at Columbia University, sending back his students' scripts highlighted with yellow Post-it notes: "... never hold back for good taste ... never say just *red dress*. Be specific: ultra-revealing micro-mini with fringe."

One day, on his way to class, Terry collapsed on the steps of Dodge Hall. He died in the hospital. His last words, as remembered by his son, were, "Yes ... yes ... time for a bit of shut-eye ... bedways is rightways now."

His output for a major writer had been remarkably limited—five slender novels and two books of short pieces. There are the screenplays, of course, but they were collaborative efforts for the most part, his contributions obscured by the bigger names involved, so that just a few lines of attributable dialogue remain. Yet he remains a substantial figure to many, admirers of his willingness to take outrageous risks with his characters and plots, and especially of his sly, often perverted sense of humor. He seemed incapable of taking anything very seriously; even eulogies composed for friends invariably contained a bawdy phrase or two, or a scene, which disqualified them from use at a funeral service. He wrote wonderful, outrageous letters to his friends.

At the last, in an attempt to get back into the Quality Lit Game, Terry went back to work on a novel he had started in 1973. He'd titled it *Double Date*. He had picked an appropriate epigram for it, an Arthur Miller line: "There is no power on Earth that can break the grip of a man with his hands [illegible]"

Not long after Terry died, I drove through a winter [illegible] in East Canaan, close by the Blackberry River, a white-clapboard, rambling farmhouse in which, Terry once told me, Benedict Arnold stayed, recovering from gun[shot] wounds. My hope was to rummage through Terry's manuscripts and find something for a commemorative section in the *Paris Review*. Gail Gerber, his longtime girlfriend, met me. She apologized for the house being in such disorder—packing boxes everywhere, furniture askew. She looked through some odds and ends in a darkened room and brought out a sword cane that I thought Terry would have liked me to have. I remember drawing the sword part out of its sheath to look at it.

At nightfall she went to a social function in town, leaving me alone in the house. I was looking through a cardboard box full of Terry's manuscripts when, from upstairs, I heard a sound that had nothing to do with the wind and the banging of shutters, something moving that was not of the rhythm of the storm. It was eerie enough that I stopped what I was doing, and, with my newly acquired sword cane—why not?—I crept up the stairs. When I reached the second landing I turned to look down a hallway corridor. To my astonishment, a face appeared from a door down at the far end, just a foot or so off the floor, and the person to whom it belonged then crouched on all fours to look out, a long face, almost luminously pale in the darkness. It reminded me instantly of Edvard Munch's famous painting *The Scream*: the maskline face used so effectively in horror movies. Impulsively, I brought the sword blade forward from its sheath.

I don't know what I would have done if the face had retreated back into the room—perhaps gone back downstairs and stepped out into the winter storm. But then the face emerged a little farther, and I could see that it was Terry's dog, Bella, a mixed breed Belgian shepherd that looked like a wolf and had followed him everywhere. She was now white-faced with age.

It didn't strike me until later how amused Terry would have been by the thought of an old friend standing, half-drawn sword in hand, heart beating fast, staring down the hall at his ancient dog.

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1,2 United Nations (N.Y.C.)/*Harper's* re- 3 [illegible] Service (Washington); 4 North American Electric Reliability Commission (Princeton, N.J.); 5 [illegible] 6 Energy Authority of Iceland (Reykjavík); 7 [illegible] Conservation (Juneau); 8–10 Florida Institute of Oceanography (St. Petersburg); 11 Center for Biological Diversity (Tucson, Ariz.); 12 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Arlington, Va.); 13 A.F.L.-C.I.O. (Washington)/*Harper's* research; 14 Oklahoma Corrections Department (Oklahoma City); U.S. Census Bureau; 15 Social Science Research Center, Mississippi State University (Starkville); 16 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Atlanta); 17 *Harper's* research; 18 FOX News/Op Dynamics (N.Y.C.); 19 Israel Minis Foreign Affairs (Jerusalem); 20 Ha (Tel Aviv, Israel); 21 International L Organization (Geneva); 22 Texas Ob (Austin); 23 Colombian National I (Bogotá); 24,25 U.S. Departme State/*Harper's* research; 26 Europear liament (Brussels); 27 U.S. Navy; 28 tral Cancer Registry (San Juan, P.R. Chernobyl Children's Project (Cork land); 30 United Nations (N.Y.C.); 3 tional Institute for Health Care Ma ment (Washington); 32 American Ph ceutical Association (Washington); Veterans Affairs Medical Center (Du N.C.); 35 World Smile Corpor (Worcester, Mass.); 36 *Harper's* rese 37 Big Fun Toys (N.Y.C.); 38 Dol Gabbana (Milan); 39 Christie's (Bost

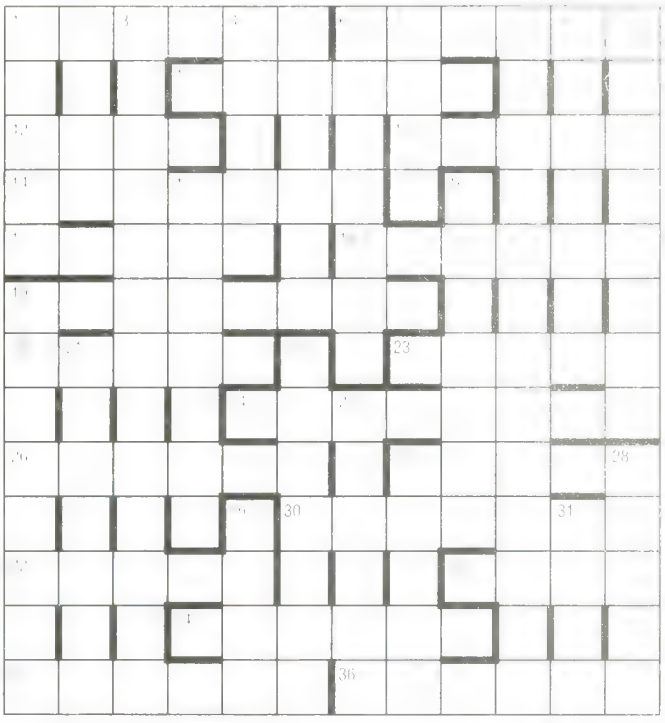
PUZZLE

Crime Scene

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

In each Across answer, the puzzle constructor has committed a crime, the perpetration of which, when read in order, is self-explanatory.

Across word-lengths are omitted. Down entries are normal. There are no obscure words or proper names. As always, mental repunctuation of clues is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 74.



ACROSS

1. Have letters dropped here by S.S.S.
6. Meat you get in a shell? Disney gets unenthusiastic response from the Jews
11. Going out with a hundred dollars tucked away that would be exciting
12. After a month, I got to be mayoral via speech
13. *Taste-Maker of Bordeaux*, perhaps—it's almost Brownian
14. Travel around indeed!
17. Gave money for author in street
18. All the same, I'm for getting taken in by a word on a bill
19. What can be spottable from work areas
20. Crayon with abandon
23. Contest putting iron in food for the masses
24. Revolutionary Studies 10 is rescheduled
26. Extremely interested people? Are they more convinced about us? Quite the reverse
27. Almost the smallest lakes
30. Rooks mensches out of rightful positions
32. A latrine in the van
33. Spies given fifty one lashes
34. Sweat embarrassingly, goin' from A to Z, almost
35. Followed type, got litigious
36. Number that can make you annoyed?

DOWN

1. Plugs away at mideast rebels outside of Damascus (5)
2. Monstrous piece of work in progress? (4)
3. Ray paying people in the house—they might have enjoyed *Last Tango at Rockefeller Plaza* (5)
4. Big plant erected around something unknown gets one put out (5)
5. Retort is way out, but the opposite (5)
6. Baseball starts and finishes (7)
7. Don't start every villainess [illegible] (4)
8. Not one sergeant in favor of engineering school in New York—it's heresy (13)
9. Runner very completely covers floor (7)
10. Do they serve oil in chipper's? (5)
15. Attracting no appreciation for upper-class novel, sounds livid (7)
16. Gets stuck on Ibsen set after repeat (5)
19. Prohibition held up record (8)
21. See through crime clothing [illegible] (5)
22. Void lid's something bad gym to the [illegible] (4)
25. Bloom had to get up to feel unwell, upset (6)
27. Lower voice, hearing New York ballplayers are in defeat (5)
28. Sidewinder the Japanese drink about noon (5)
29. Limit of knowledge! (4)
31. Kind of trimmer that covers [illegible] (4)

Contest Rules: Send us [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

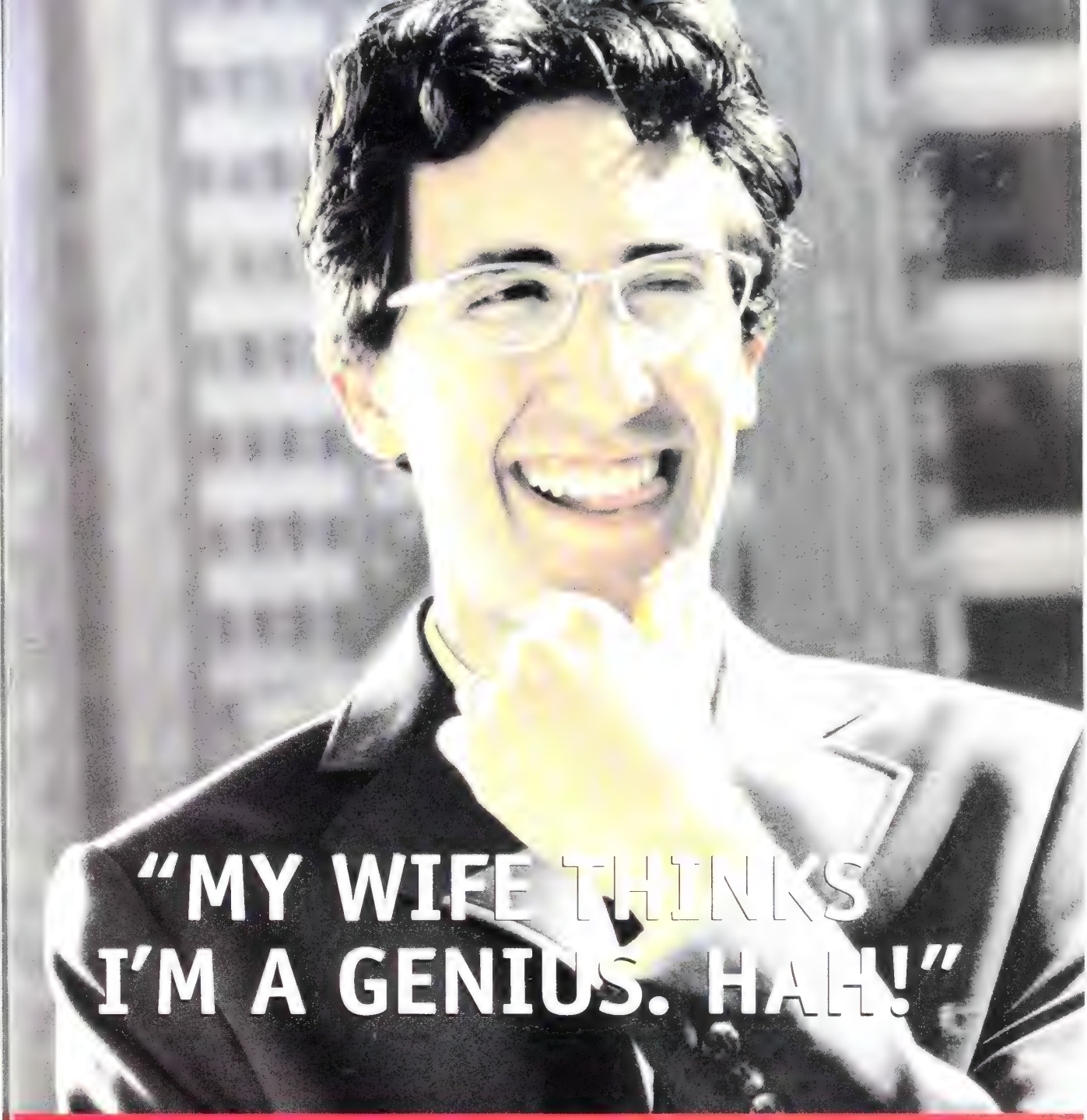
EARTH TO GEORGE!

Antarctica is shrinking. On the Antarctic Peninsula, /
researchers have spent decades documenting vanishing ice shelves, species' upheavals, and a surprising spread of g
ery: the average temperature has risen more than twice as fast in the last century as in the rest of the world. Winte
erages on the western edge of the peninsula have jumped by ten degrees Fahrenheit since 1950. The Larsen Ice She
the peninsula's northernmost tip (pictured), has all but disappeared in the last two decades, and the disintegration
Ice Shelf has rendered James Ross Island circumnavigable. At the same time, several South Pacific islands are threaten
As the ice disappears, species are thrown out of balance (see below). This year the interagency National Ice Center has
tracking nearly 15,000 square miles of icebergs in the Southern Hemisphere, including on
size of Connecticut, the largest ever recorded. Although some scientists still believe that
perature fluctuations are part of a 10,000-year trend that began at the end of the last ice ag
most none deny that global warming as well as the rise in air-pollution levels have beer
precedented in recent decades, a confluence it would be foolish to ignore. Barring solutio
does not take a rocket scientist to understand that further warming will disastrously redraw
map (and the nature) of the world, leaving even the most flawless of missile-defense systems

area of detail

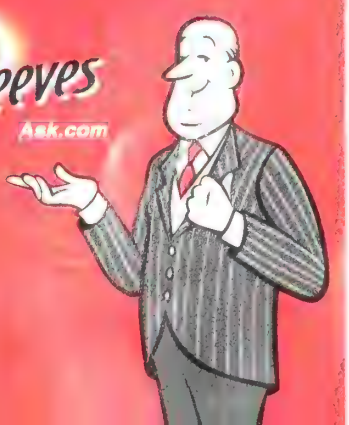


Dependent on ice for its habitat, the Adélie penguin popul
tion has been halved since 1975; over the same time perio
Chinstrap penguins, which usually thrive in warmer clime
have increased their numbers on Anvers Island by seve
hundred percent. Both feed on shrimplike krill—also disappeari
as the ice recedes—for which they must now hunt nearly thr
times as long. Since krill is the most abundant animal on earth
biomass, a drastic reduction in its numbers could disturb the fo
cha n far beyond the earth's icy margins. Meanwhile, the penguii
face new competition from the elephant seal, lured from the nor
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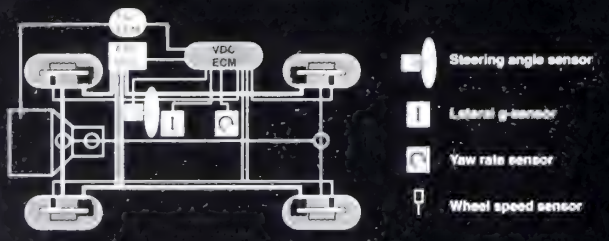
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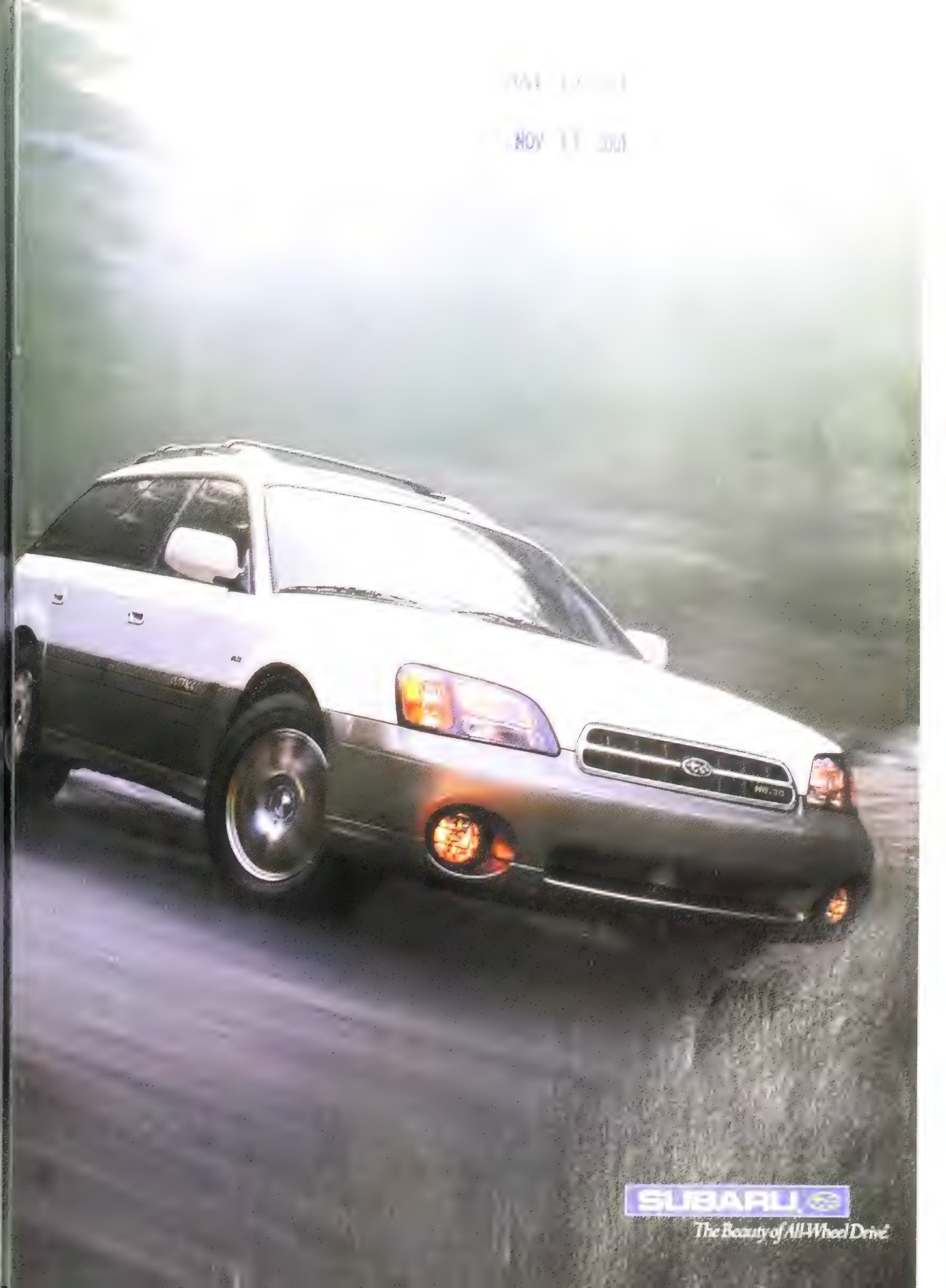
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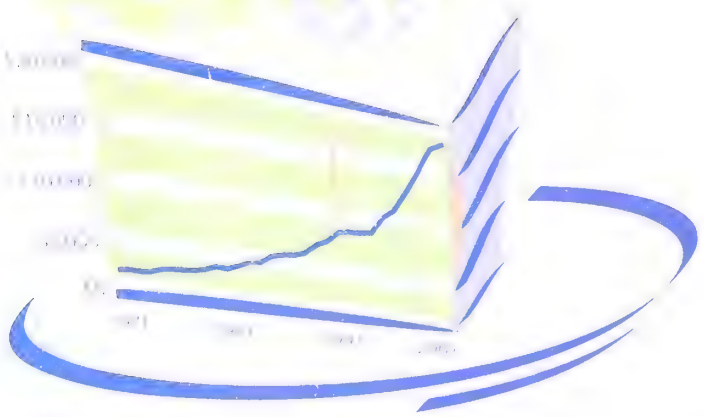
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HARPER'S

M A G A Z I N E

FOUNDED IN JUNE, 1850 VOLUME [illegible]

SEPTEMBER [illegible]

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HARPERS

LETTERS

All the World's a Stage Set

I thoroughly enjoyed Arthur
ities ["American Playhouse," June].
But Miller's theory that our politi-
cians are actors does not explain
the results of the last presidential
election. Last fall we were con-
stantly asked questions such as
"Who would you rather have a beer
with?" After the debates, I always
wanted to ask, "Who would you
rather cast as Mark Antony?" Gore
had massive stage presence, knew
his script and source material for-
ward and backward, spoke boldly
and cheerfully (when he permitted
probably have improvised in iambic

By contrast, his costar Bush kept
going up on his lines. He appeared
fearful and skittish, with perpetual-
ly hunched shoulders and darting
string of meaningless words leading
the worst acting I've ever
nnest
nswer is that the agenda,
issues but was rather
still run for president. Idiocy
reigned supreme in popular
and movies and on TV, why
the White House? Gore tried
dumb himself down—tried to
his vocabulary, tried to stop
do it. It was painful to see him
the attempt. Like Mark An
falling on his own sword, he
not because he was weaker o
resolved than his opponent b
cause he was too old-fashioned.

William D. Michie
New York City

When will Arthur Miller
others like him stop wailing
behind a curtain of prose a
George W. Bush's victory?
Miller goes into great detail a
how past presidents plavacte
the political platform, and
Bush and Al Gore tried to cov
their real personae during
campaign. But then, in just
fractured election and donati
the Supreme Court"—Mr. M
abandons his role of unbiased
server. He adds, "After this
most hallucinatory of electio
was said that in the end the
worked, when clearly it hadn
all." The political play, he says
people feeling "cheated and
mocked."

I'm afraid Mr. Miller will ha
get over it. Al Gore didn't wi
president's trophy despite h
mance. Obviously, he could
up his arrogant condescendin
ture or his past robust loyalty t
Clinton, who put on a perform

Sure, we
EXPERIMENTED
IN THE
SIXTIES.

(That's when we began using sherry casks.)



It was a wild time to be sure. So wild that our family whisky men obtained some Spanish sherry casks and filled them with single malt. Eighteen years later, we matured and so did the whisky. We combined it with whisky from our traditional oak casks and the result was awesome — a smooth marriage of sherry sweetness and rich oakiness with notes of honey.

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[illegible] millionaire cars, and the [illegible] fenses") being pawnbrokers; that is, [illegible] things that the pawner finds dear.

[illegible] article's not about all about the things we carry; it's about [illegible] the multiple and intersecting values [illegible]

Joshua Wolt Shenk, after long re[illegible] the nature of his grandfa[illegible] that [illegible] disappointed by [illegible] monetary value. But he [illegible] that [illegible] lucky that the rest of the world [illegible] treasured Grandma's antique painting that she [illegible] much because it was from her hometown in the Old World, which at auction might bring $15–20,000, starts to look like a new pickup truck. Shenk and his descendants will, one hopes, never be [illegible] that they will start to eye Grandpa's typewriter with a notion that it can solve their problems. Burglars will not even notice the crappy old typewriter as they [illegible] about disconnecting his television and drinking his scotch. [illegible] and his family will [illegible] appreciate its true value, it is safe from the aspirations of others. It can be kept in plain sight, it can [illegible] to children without [illegible]. Because it will be accessible in this way, its true value can be shared: worthless to others and priceless to them. I hope those who go to an *Antiques Roadshow* appraisal and discover that their objects are without monetary value [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] when appraising a vintage Hebrew-lettered manual typewriter and when evaluating the career of a south Texas rabbi.

[illegible] once owned by Rabbi Sidney Wolt would be worth far more, monetarily [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

o begin with, even conservative
nmarians have long acknowl-
ed that split infinitives can be
ectly proper. Among these de
lers are Onions (1904), Louns
ry (1908), Bierce (1909), Hall
17), Fowler (1923), Weseen
28), Curme (1931), Leonard
32), Jespersen (1933), Partridge
42), Stratton (1949), Vallins
51), Ralph (1952), Lewis (1961),
nstein (1965), Follett (1966),
perud (1970), Safire (1980),
son (1984), Sabin (1993), Amer-
n Heritage (1996), O'Conner
96), and Wallraff (2000), and
t I really keep multiplying these
mples?

Now for a look further into his-
y. The most influential gram-
ian of the nineteenth century,
dley Murray (1745–1826), nev-
nentioned the split infinitive in
of his books. Nor did his con
poraries. The earliest named
ic of the split infinitive was
rph P. Chandler (1847), and
eral grammarians joined him in
demning it—Alford (1866),
:he (1869), Hodgson (1889),
Nesfield (1906), and Folsom
(1928).

Somehow, though, in the days
when people actually cared, as a
community, about their language,
these few condemnations stuck in
the collective linguistic craw. Even
after a century of regular debunk
ing, it's tough to dislodge the shib-
boleth from the popular mind. Yet
most good writers don't worry
about it much.

Still, more than seventy-five
years after H. W. Fowler exploded
the superstition, Felton makes a
two-headed argument against split
infinitives: that they (1) "bury ad-
verbs and thus suck the life out of
them," and (2) "create 'structural
ambiguity.'" Both points are badly
out of step with modern prescrip-
tive thought on the point, the op-
posite of each one being true. In
fact, splitting an infinitive intensi-
fies the adverb (*to boldly go*), and
splitting generally cures what
would otherwise be structurally am-
biguous (*Mr. Bush is proposing to al-
most double to $59 million a program
started by his father*). Try moving
"boldly" or "almost" and
have a good ear) you'll hear lifeless,
ambiguous sentences.

On the very day when I received
the *Harper's* issue containing
Felton's letter (June 14), the front
page of the *New York Times* had a
split infinitive heading on page 1:
"China Said to Sharply Reduce
Emissions of Carbon Dioxide." The
headline writer could have sent
"sharply" to the end, but then it's
rather badly separated from what it
modifies. And if the writer had put
down, "China Said Sharply to Re-
duce . . . ," a couple of syntactic am-
biguities would have resulted. (Chi-
na said it sharply? To whom? The
passive "said" now seems active, and
"sharply" doesn't seem to modify
"reduce.") These are the kinds of is-
sues that copy editors deal with
hourly.

When my *Dictionary of Modern
American Usage* was published in late
1998, there was a widely printed AP
wire story: "To Split or Not to Split:
Oxford Abandons Rule Governing
Infinitives." It was big news through-
out the nation. And it will be big



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news again when the *New Oxford American Dictionary* comes out this month, no doubt like-new the construction. It'll be on the front pages as an amazing revelation. This phenomenon will doubtless repeat itself throughout the twenty-first century. And each time will be a mindblower because nobody quite sees it the first time or the second . . . or the ninety-ninth time.

And, of course, the people blasting this bugaboo are prescriptive linguist — the people who want to promote normative principles of writing.

Bryan A. Garner
Dallas

A Sound Argument

Gordon Reynolds's June letter regarding Garret Keizer's essay on noise ["Sound and Fury," March] hypothesizes that students in classrooms adjacent to noisy trains do worse in reading because they are taught by "newer, less experienced teachers who are assigned the inferior classrooms." He dismisses my conclusion, which Keizer cites in his essay, that the intrusive noise of the elevated trains was responsible for the poorer performance—a conclusion substantiated by many other studies linking noise to poorer cognitive thinking, language, and learning skills.

Let me add that, in a second study, when noise-abatement treatments were installed on the tracks and in the classrooms facing the tracks, and thus the noise in the classrooms was lowered significantly, the reading scores of the children facing the tracks were at the same level as those of the children on the quiet side of the building. Had Mr. Reynolds known the results of this later study when he wrote his letter, he might not have injected his hypothesis, one that he did not support with data.

[illegible]
[illegible]

Baby Snatchers

In their response to Peggy Farber's Annotation ["Broken Homepage," April] on the fad of rushing p children into middle-class adopt homes to solve child-welfare pr lems, Rowena Dodson and her c leagues at Pittsburgh's Adoption gal Services Project were misgui in defending the so-called Adopt and Safe Families Act of 1997 [I ters, July].

The consequences of the Ad tion and Safe Families Act w made plain in an outstanding fo part front-page series in Dodso hometown paper, the *Pittsburgh P Gazette*. The series presented case ter case in which authorities neighboring Beaver County wro fully took children from impov ished homes, undercut efforts to unite those families, and then rush the children into adoptive hon sometimes with families that h connections to the county child-w fare agency and court system. T series illustrated how Beaver Cou used the Adoption and Safe Fami Act to turn its child-welfare syst into the ultimate middle-class e tlement: Step right up and tak poor person's child for your v own. How could Dodson & Co. h missed it?

Richard Wexler
Executive Director
National Coalition for Child Prot tion Reform
Alexandria, Va.

Correction

The introduction to Constant P. Cavafy's poem "The Shi [Readings, May] incorrectly sta that the translation, by Theoha Constantine Theoharis, was the f and only English translation of poem—information provided to by Harcourt, Inc., publishers of *fore Time Could Change Them: Complete Poems of Constantine Cavafy*.

In fact, the poem was translat previously by Edmund Keeley a Dimitri Gondicas for the Autu 1994 issue of *Antaeus* (No. 75–7 and was subsequently included *The Essential Cavafy* (The Ec Press, 1995), still carried in print Ecco Press/HarperCollins.

NOTEBOOK

Study hall

By Lewis H. Lapham

…oyful putrefaction *threatens the Ris… Generation; Barbarous* Ignorance, *… unavoidable consequence of a… trageous* Wickedness *will make the …ing* Generation *Loathsome, if it … not Schools to prevent it.*

Cotton Mather,
An address, *Memorable Provi…*
1690

…n unfriendly foreign power had at…pted to impose on America the …fliocre educational performance that …s today, we might well have viewed … as an act of war. We have in fact … been committing an act of unthink… unilateral educational disarmament.

—*A Nation at Risk*, The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983

Two hundred and eighty-four years between the two storm warn…s, and the American idea of edu…ation remains as it was in the begin…ng, better understood as a …fession of faith than a course of …truction. The Reverend Mather …dressed his remarks to a Puritan …ngregation in the Massachusetts …y Colony, further alarmed than …ed, as a "the cold deluder," …ld strike no "greater Blow to the …rmation amongst us than by car… schools to Languish under Dis…couragements." Let the schools rot, …d the preacher, and "then hee de…oyed thyself, O New England."

The authors of *A Nation at Risk* were …rned about the Russians. In 1957 …e cold deluder had shown the Rus…s how to launch a spacecraft into …e heavens, and twenty-six years …er it was still being seen from …shington as a fateful portent fore…eing an end to America's "once unchallenged preeminence in com…merce, industry, science, and techno…logical innovation." Neil Armstrong had been to the moon and back, but the Siberian tiger in the meantime had been cooled with a touch of in…tercontinental ballistic missiles, and President Reagan assembled the Commission to see if the menace of the Blow of which the evil Soviet empire was then thought capable. After foraging for eighteen months in the wilderness of academic study …roups, the committee returned with bad news. Our schools were drowning in "a rising tide of mediocrity," and unless we strengthened the sand…bags of the curriculum and raised the height of the test scores, we could say …oodbye to our "prosperity, security, and civility." Beneath the immediate …ult, Mather had never left that par…ticular lower limb. Employ their Wits …n other Devices, commanded Harvard's …nstruction sheets.

Being American, as Tocqueville's definition a self-improving people al…ways on the road to the milk-white …ne of perfection, we are prone to …ainst the power that other societies …ward Incarnation, the word Incarn…ated with certainty and immediacy …at can be counted with Maddin Lang…made to order in response to the …ay our mind thinks we like it. …ur answer to every mother's …prayer. The hitch in our national …pectation of education (Ralph …Waldo Emerson on the left, Ethel …the golden door of "intellectual en…largement" through which "a man …ight become enough in pre-…ence of the corporation, the per…ceiving state," shrugging off "the dis…ciple" to do for "enterprise" …place as "a new Adam in the garden, …who] is to name all the beasts in the …field, all the cows in the …" John …Dewey in 1897, put it in plain …"the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and the inductor into the true freedom of God."

Our modern faith in the miracle of technological application compared to the seventeenth century must be measured not to cope with the corporate temper of the times the rapidly proliferating forms of al…ternate education—charter schools, educational management organ…izations, school vouchers, distance learning, home-schooling, diplomas awarded on the Internet, etc.—copy the …ildren of the successful, are enterprise. The new generation of prophet borrows the vocabulary of the marketing director and the sys…tems engineer. Touting education as …e consumer product, the speakers' brand value and pricing strategies, formulate statements on video…sette, design their arks of safety and …elivery in the manner of user-…friendly theme parks. People …-…-… intelligent …-… …centrate on the …-… …-… …-…

I

y kind of weather). A standard
ucct (scientifically certified and
rnment inspected) to which we
ffix the label "educated citizen."
he best of my knowledge I never
such a person, and I assume that
phrase refers to an imaginary be-
similar to the polo player on a
shirt or the griffin in a medieval
iary. I can conceive of a "self-ed-
ing citizen," and I have had the
fortune to meet a number of
ple who can be so described, but
e have had the temerity to pro-
n themselves educated. Without
ption they possess the valor of
r ignorance, conceiving of an ed-
ion neither as a blessed state of
e (comparable to membership in
Corinthian Yacht Club) nor as a
cious object sold in the store
n at Harvard's rate of $32,000
annum) but rather as a ceaseless
ess of learning and relearning. If
ixteen years they have spent
,800 hours in school (roughly the
valent of twenty four months),
expect to spend another fifty
s amending and revising what
thought they had learned there.
he possibility assumes the pres-
e of an active mind, which is what
erns the four people taking part in
conversation that appears in this is-
of *Harper's Magazine* on pages 49
ough 63. Practitioners instead of
orists, they talk about teaching as
rt rather than a science, and al-
igh I didn't ask the question, I ex-
t they would say that no single
ool, and certainly no nationwide
sortium or conglomerate, can sus-
the claim to unqualified excel-
e. Some schools are better than
rs, but no school exists in the
ld out of time, unflooded by the
of mediocrity that flows into the
srooms from the ocean of a society
doesn't expect its statesmen or its
ie stars to know how to diagram an
lish sentence or point to Thermopylae on a map. Even the best of
ols cannot reform the nation's pol-
s, cannot elevate the nation's
als or correct errors in the blue
ks of popular taste. But a good
her can influence even the most
romising of students to the unique
ength of his or her own mind.

The participants in the Forum are-

one for the modest proposition that few pleasures rival the joy of the intellect being put to constructive or imaginative use, that it is more fun to know something than to own something. All idealists, they take their cue from Emerson, who believed that the "great object of Education should be commensurate with the object of life . . . to teach self-trust . . . to inspire the youthful man with an interest in himself . . . to acquaint him with the resources of his mind, and to teach him that there is all his strength . . ." I know of no more hopeful prospect anywhere on the American horizon. Although I can wish that we paid our teachers better salaries, or that the $1.5 million spent on a thirty-second Pepsi commercial might be spent on books and school libraries, wishing won't make it so, and until the old dolts order allows the society to rearrange its order of priorities, I suspect that most of the federal money voted to the cause of education will do little else except enrich the publishers of fraudulent achievement tests. The children meanwhile will learn, as they have always learned, against the usual long odds and fortunate in their pursuit of happiness if they come across tour guides as dedicated as tutors Sizer, Jordan, Stewart, and Cinto.

Idealism is very exhilarating, and it can be parsed, at least in democratic societies, as another word for freedom. Democracy proceeds on the assumption that nobody knows enough, that nothing is final, that the old order (whether of men or institutions) will be carried offstage every twenty years. The multiplicity of its voices and forms assumes a ceaseless making and remaking of laws and customs as well as of equations and matinee idols. If democracy can be understood as a field of temporary coalitions among people of different interests, skills, and generations, then everybody has need of everybody else. To the extent that a democratic government gives its citizens a chance to chase their own dreams, it gives itself the chance not only of discovering its multiple glories and triumphs but also of surviving its multiple follies and crimes. ■



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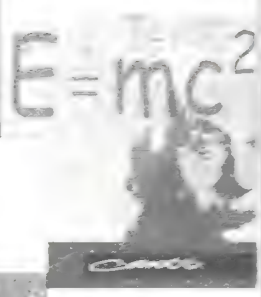
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Michael J.A. Howe



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Michael Jonathan Reiss and Roger Straughan



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HARPER'S INDEX

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READINGS

[Essay]

DEATH COMES FLYING

From A History of Bombing, *by Sven Lindqvist, published by The New Press. Translated from the Swedish by Linda Haverty Rugg.*

In the beginning was the bomb. It consisted of a pipe, like a bamboo pipe of the type abundant in China, filled with an explosive, like gunpowder, which the Chinese had discovered as early as the ninth century. If one closed this pipe at both ends, it became a bomb. When the pipe was opened at one end, it was blown forward by the explosion. The bomb then became a rocket. It soon developed into a two-stage rocket—a large rocket that rose into the air and released a shower of small rockets over the enemy. The Chinese used rockets of this type in their defense of Kaifeng in 1232. The rocket weapon spread via the Arabs and Indians to Europe around 1250—but it was forgotten again until the English rediscovered it at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

If the rocket was opened at the other end, the bomb became a gun or a cannon. The explosion blew out whatever had been tamped into the pipe, like a bullet or another, smaller bomb, called a shell. Both the gun and the cannon had been fully developed in China by 1280, and they reached Europe thirty years later.

Bombs began to be used in warfare around the same time that the chemical equation for gunpowder was first published, in 1044. They were dropped from the tops of city walls or slung from catapults at the enemy.

The first technical description of a bomb, made in Chinese during the twelfth century, shows the bomb filled with thirty-odd thin slivers of porcelain, which were flung out in the explosion. Starting in 1412, there are descriptions of "fragmentation bombs" filled with iron shot or shards of porcelain inside a thin cast-iron shell, which blew to bits with the explosion. The jagged shards of metal were intended to "wound the skin and break the bones." Thus the first bombs were what today we call antipersonnel bombs, intended for battling so-called soft targets.

The first depiction of war to describe the use of bombs dates from 1207. It emphasizes what would later be called the "morale effect" or the "terror effect." When the bombs exploded, "the [enemy] wretches were terrified and quite lost their senses, men and horses [illegible] as fast as they could."

For a long time the bomb was considered a primitive forerunner to the rocket or cannon. But the early theoreticians of flight realized that the bomb could be a terrible weapon if it could be thrown from the air.

In his *[illegible]* ("The Ship") of 1670, Francesco de Lana Terzi already warned of airships that from an appropriate height could drop "armed men [illegible] houses, castles, or cities [illegible] selves in the worst [illegible] ing, he himself [illegible] ship built on the [illegible]

In 1743, [illegible]





catastrophic results for the inhabitants. But since this threat would hover over all the countries at war, they would, Heyne believed, soon agree on rules to prevent flying machines from being used for purposes of terror or mass destruction.

Balloons proved to be so vulnerable and difficult to steer that they lacked significant military value. A hundred years later, in 1899, at The Hague, the great powers could therefore agree to follow Heyne's recommendation and forbid bombardment from balloons.

On December 17, 1903, at 10:35 A.M., the first motor-driven airplane lifted off and flew. For only twelve seconds, and for only forty yards—but an ancient dream was fulfilled in that moment. Finally humans could fly! That [illegible] in the excitement. All of the dangers associated with the [illegible] first airplane.

[illegible] saw an airplane for the first time in 1908. [illegible] Yes, the miracle came to pass. [illegible]

Flight seemed to be a step into a new element. People spoke of the "normal age" and felt that we had now left behind our [illegible] existence and branched into a new way of life. Flying would be as normal as riding a bicycle, as natural as walking.

All good things would come with flight: democracy, equality, freedom. The air was freedom's realm, where travel went on unimpeded by rails, [illegible] customs officers. Emile Zola saw a great future in the air, where old gender differences would no longer apply. When cars were replaced by planes, black chauffeurs would train to be pilots and soon be the leaders of the air, accustomed to [illegible] the helpful team of the night.

Flight would lift humankind from the filth of the earth and create a new life-form, according to Ulrich Willy Lawson, an early adherent of the gospel of flight. He believed in a new kind of human being, the "alti-man," who would be born in the air and live his whole life up there. In the future, the "ground-men" who continued to walk on the bottom of the air-sea would be regarded in much the way we regard oysters and crabs. Lawson's alti-man would conquer all the limitations of the earth and become an angel or a god.

Other new means of transport met impassioned resistance from people who feared their social consequences. Not so the airplane. No one maintained that flight disfigured the landscape, as the railroad did, or that it destroyed the morals of the youth, as did the bicycle and the automobile.

New weapons—machine guns, tanks, poisonous gas—were sincerely detested by the general public. But not airplanes. The British sometimes feared that their hereditary foe, France, would invade England with troops sent in from the air. But their delight in airplanes conquered their fear. Even when airplanes were used to kill people on the ground, air war was generally considered "purer" and "nobler" than other forms of warfare. Pilots were seen as the duelists of the air, modern knights engaging in a heavenly tournament.

Airplanes were said to preserve the peace, mainly by democratizing the dangers of war. Up to this time, those who commanded others to do battle with one another could feel quite comfortable about their own safety. But in the age of flight they too would be exposed and therefore would be less inclined to begin a war. People also believed that flight would do away with the very cause of national conflicts by bringing people closer to one another. People who flew would get to know and respect one another. Those who had been divisive and hostile on the ground would live peacefully together in the boundless heavens during the age of flight.

The first bomb dropped from an airplane exploded in an oasis outside Tripoli on November 1, 1911. Since the beginning of the sixteenth century, North Africa had enjoyed a relatively independent position in the Turkish empire. During the nineteenth century, the Turks lost possession after possession to the European powers, and by 1911 only a little strip of coastline remained to them, between British Egypt and French Tunisia. Now the Italians wanted to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of a united Italy by conquering that last little piece of Turkish North Africa—the city of Tripoli, with its

[Poem]

CLONING

To Marcel Hacker [illegible] appeared first in the Times Literary Supplement. *Translated from the [illegible] by Richard Flood. Hacker died in 1998.*

Present:

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Crowds with bald heads.
Crowds with sidecurls

[illegible]

[illegible]
The world begins the day after tomorrow.

[illegible]

Harps strung with human hair.
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]
They inhale laughing gas,

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

30,000 inhabitants, and a wide stretch of desert populated by about 600,000 Arab nomads.

The Tripoli war was a godsend for the Italian pilots. Just three years after the first exhibit of flight in Paris, they would now have a chance to battle-test the new weapon. Everything they did was wonderfully new. One of them mounted a camera in his airplane and took the first air photography. Another made the first night raid, and a third dropped the first firebomb. A fourth was the first to be shot down.

A theory of precision bombing—with the pilot as policeman, the bomb as his baton—was developed early by R. P. Hearne in *Airships in Peace and War* (1910). Punitive expeditions are costly and time-consuming. It can take months for them to reach their goal. But punishment from the air can be carried out immediately and at a much lower cost. "In savage lands the moral effect of such an instrument of war is impossible to conceive," writes Hearne. "The appearance of the airship would strike terror into the tribes." And in addition, one could avoid "the awful waste of life occasioned to white troops by expeditionary work." The air force could simply patrol the land as the navy patrolled the sea. When necessary, bombers could mete out a "sharp, severe, and terrible punishment," which would nevertheless be more humane than a traditional punitive expedition. For the bombs would affect only the lawbreakers and would leave the innocent unharmed.

This was, of course, pure fantasy. Hearne's idea demanded a precision that did not exist. When the French sent six planes to perform police actions in Morocco in 1912, the pilots chose large targets—villages, markets, grazing herds—otherwise their bombs would miss. And when the Spaniards began bombing "their" part of Morocco the next year, they used German cartouche bombs, filled with explosives and steel balls, bombs that were specially made not to focus their effect but to spread it to as many living targets as possible.

At the end of the First World War, Great Britain had the world's only independent air force and a fleet of 3,300 planes, which had played an almost negligible role in the outcome of the war. Now the entire military was to be reduced to peacetime levels. Each branch of service would have to prove its indispensability. It was easier for the two traditional branches; they both agreed that the air force ought to be disbanded. Churchill was assigned the task of wielding the axe for the government. At that point the commander in chief of the air force, Sir Hugh Trenchard, let everything go all out.

Trenchard played his trump card: The Mad Mullah of Somaliland.

Mohammed Ibn Abdullah Hassan, called "The Mad Mullah" by his enemies, had long been a thorn in the British lion's paw. Countless punitive expeditions had failed to punish him. Now the general staff wanted to engage two divisions for twelve months in an offensive against the mullah. In addition, millions would be required to build the roads, railroads, and military bases necessary to occupy the country.

Trenchard proposed to fix the mullah from the air, with twelve airplanes and a maximum of 250 men. Squadron 221, which soon would bomb Iraqi villages to stimulate oil production on behalf of the British empire, was first sent to Somaliland.

Mohammed had never seen an airplane, much less a bomb. He gave no evidence of fear. He did what he usually did when he had unexpected visitors: he dressed in his most elegant clothes and presented himself, surrounded by his most respected counselors, in front of his house under a white canopy that was used on ceremonial occasions. There he awaited the arrival of the foreign emissaries.

The first bomb almost put an end to the war. It killed Mohammed's counselors, and he himself had his clothes smeared by the explosion. The next bombardment killed his interpreter and several of his immediate family members. Then for two days the British bombers attacked Mohammed and his family while they fled through the desert like hunted animals. Finally they were forced to give up.

Total time required: a week instead of a year. Total cost: £77,000. Churchill persuaded the government to maintain the air force out of purely economic considerations. Then he offered the RAF 6 million to take over from the army control of the Iraq operation, which had cost 18 million thus far.

Like other colonial powers, the British had already been bombing recalcitrants in their territories for several years. It began with the Pathans on India's northwestern border in 1915. It didn't help much just to destroy their villages. But if their irrigation ditches were bombed, their water supply would be emptied and the topsoil washed away from the terraces. Then they got the message.

The British bombed [illegible] and the rebellious sultan [illegible] in 1917. Bombers put down [illegible] Mashud, on India's [illegible]. During the third Afghan war, in 1919, Dacca, Jalalabad, and Kabul [illegible] squadron, [illegible] memoirs he writes that the war was won by a single strike with a one-kiloton bomb on the

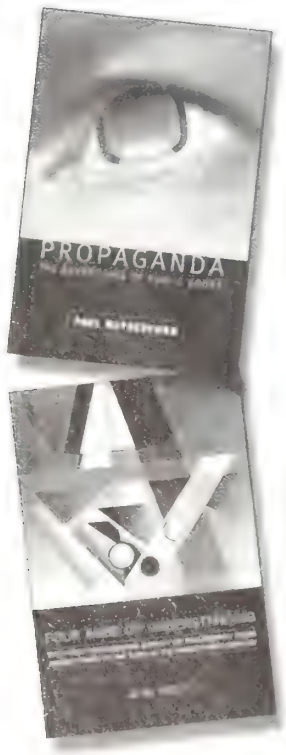


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Michael Woodiwiss

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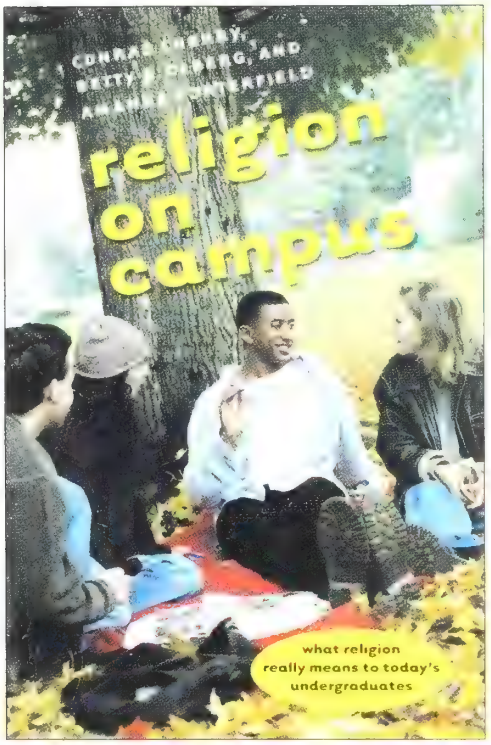


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Afghani king's palace. Harris would spend the [illegible] to spot their strike.

The same year, the Egyptians demanded independence, and the RAF sent in three squadrons of bombers to control the rebellious masses. In 1920, the city of Enzeli in Iran was bombed in an attempt to create a British puppet [illegible], and in Trans-Jordan the British put a stop to [illegible] with bombs that killed 200.

This kind of thing was already routine. But in Iraq the assignment was different. It was called "control without occupation." The RAF and its bombers were assigned to replace completely fifty-one battalions of soldiers, which was what the army had needed to control a country that, during the First World War, had freed itself from centuries of Turkish rule and now refused to accept the British as their new masters.

In principle, the inhabitants were supposed to be warned before a raid. In principle, houses, animals, and soldiers were supposed to be targets, and not the elderly, women, or children. In practice, things didn't always go that way. The first report from Baghdad describes an air raid that caused wild confusion among the natives and their families. "Many of them jumped into a lake, making a good target for the machine guns."

"What are the rules for this kind of cricket?" asked the newly appointed chief for India's Northwest Province, Sir John Maffrey. The air-force headquarters for India answered that international law did not apply "against savage tribes who do not conform to codes of civilized warfare." Warning ought to be given before an attack (so that people could take cover), but on the other hand, the attack should be a surprise (since that would increase the death toll). Loss of life was, after all, what made the greatest impact on morale.

Women held little value for the natives, reported headquarters, but instead were considered "a piece of property somewhere between a rifle and a cow." So killing their women could not be justly compared with similar losses among European civilians.

A 1922 RAF memorandum lists a series of available means of terror: timed bombs; phosphorus bombs; "crow's feet," which maimed humans and livestock; whistling arrows; crude oil used to pollute drinking water; and "liquid fire," a forerunner to napalm.

The British were not the only ones to bomb their colonies into submission. The Spaniards were even more brutal in Morocco. On June 29, 1924, twenty Spanish planes dropped 600 bombs on villages near Tetuán, causing large civilian losses. The Moors responded to these "Christian methods of warfare" by torturing and maiming Spanish prisoners of war. By September the German consulate in Tetuán reported that the Moroccan rebels were now being "punished in the heart of their country." The air force blew up houses, burned harvests, and attacked villages with mustard gas.

And what happened to those who burned the villages of the savages, massacring their women and children? What did they learn? How could one keep the lawlessness of the wars outside Europe from seeping into wars between Europeans?

One person who asked these questions early on was James Anson Farrer. In his classic *Military Manners and Customs* (1885), he says that wars between peoples with different standards of civilization do "more to barbarise the civilised than to civilise the barbarous population." Farrer considers it a proven fact that European wars became more lawless as a result of the habits acquired by the troops on the other

[illegible]

FLY! FLY, MY PRETTIES!

[illegible] *ary 14, 1963, from the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations to J. A. Califano Jr., special assistant to the secretary of the army. The memo was obtained by the National Security Archive.*

Subj: Measures to Restrict Travel to Cuba for Subversive Training

[illegible] returning from Cuba.

CONSIDERATION: Value of this action lies in destroying a potentially dangerous individual while simultaneously serving as a warning to other potential trainees. It is politically risky and contrary to our moral precepts. Could boomerang by creating martyrs.

B. ACTION: Make pro-West, anti-Castro leaflet [illegible] directed at major population centers. Would substantially increase risk of attack on U.S. essential photo recon flights.

C. ACTION: Attach incendiary devices to bats [illegible] ties during daylight. Incendiaries ignite by timers and start fires.



king, Coughing, *by Robert Schuett*

side of the Atlantic. There the ties of humanity had been cut by differences in race and religion. There all inhibitions fell away. We see the same phenomenon in Roman history. "The Roman annalists bear witness to the deterioration that ensued both in their modes of waging war and in the national character."

The colonial wars have accustomed European military men and politicians to see all warfare as a kind of punitive expedition against rebels and criminals, writes Farrer. They have learned to demand unconditional surrender under humiliating terms, which unnecessarily embitters and prolongs the conflicts. They have learned to burn cities and villages. Once a commander has set fire to an African capital, might he have learned to burn Paris or Berlin?

In the spring of 1912, Stockholm's *Dagens Nyheter* published Gustaf Janson's tale of the Tripoli war, which came out that fall as a book entitled *The Pride of War*. It enjoyed great success internationally. Each chapter looks at the war from the point of view of an individual—a Turkish peasant soldier, for example, or an Italian infantryman. The last chapter describes the rush of power that an aviator gets from his bombs, soaring high above the desert, one of the elect, unassailable. "The empty earth beneath him, the empty sky above and he, the solitary man, sailing between them! A feeling of power seizes him! He [illegible] to assert the superiority of the white race. Within his reach he has the [illegible] explosive [illegible]

[illegible] that was convincing and [illegible]

[illegible] that airplanes and bombs were examples of progress in military technology. And technology was civilization. Civilization brought with it the duty to expand civilization. By violent means, if necessary, even [illegible] tattered resistance.

To bomb a funeral or a hospital, as Gustaf Janson's pilot did, was naturally against the rules of war. But in their analysis of the Tripoli war, legal experts found a defense even for this type of action. The civilizing mission of the technologically superior Italians was of a higher order, they said, than human laws and humanitarian values. "When the highest principles of civilization contradict the written laws of humanity, the latter must give way—colonial law rests in its entirety on this assumption," wrote a Dr. Tambaro in *Zeitschrift für internationales Recht*. Nobody contradicted him.

[Propaganda]

THIS IS NOT A TEST

The following transcript is from America at Risk, *an "educational film" produced for the Space and Missile Defense Working Group, a division of the National Defense Industrial Association. The film was distributed to governors and top school officials in all fifty states. The missile-defense system, which ultimately will cost more than $60 billion, has yet to pass a realistic test.*

[illegible]

[*Lone, sweeping aerial views of strip malls and highways, fading into scenes of suburban streets—children getting out of school, riding bikes, playing soccer*]

[illegible]

[*Bill, his wife, and their daughter, Rachel, eating* [illegible]]

RACHEL: Jimmy, this boy in my class, he spilled [illegible] on [illegible]

BILL: Red paint?

RACHEL: Uh-huh. Mommy, can I please be excused?

BILL: I guess so.

[*Rachel goes to play in the den*]

[illegible] of those Third World countries? What are they called, "rogue nations" or something?

[illegible]

There must be half a dozen countries all threatening to fire missiles at us, to keep us out of their business. You know, just like North Korea the other night, when we wanted to keep them from moving on South Korea. And just the other day China made that speech about us interfering in their new desire to take back Taiwan.

WIFE: Oh, honey, all that's just talk. You know, we hear it all the time.

BILL: Maybe so, but we've really gotten mixed up more and more in situations where countries threaten us with their ballistic missiles.

WIFE: Sweetheart, if they did fire something at us, we could handle it. We'd just shoot them down. They really can't get to us with those things, you know.

BILL: Yeah, but I've still got a bad feeling about all this talk of missiles being fired at us. There's been so much happening just in the past week. Tensions have gotten really high, and all that diplomatic stuff sure hasn't worked.

WIFE: Don't worry. There's been plenty of time and more than enough people to have already taken care of these things. Look, Bill, no one's going to do anything to us. We're the United States of America, for goodness sake! With all that money our country spends on defense, we've got it covered. Now come on, give me a hand?

[*Wife walks to sink*]

SCENE 3

[*Daughter stands in front of television holding a remote control. A news program ends, and an orange triangle appears behind the words* STAND BY.]

TV: This is not a test.

RACHEL: Mommy?

TV: Repeat. This is not a test.

[*Cut to Bill and wife standing at sink*]

BILL: Oh no!

WIFE: What's happening?

[*Bomb sirens sound*]

BILL: I don't believe it. This is it. It's all over.

WIFE: Bill, where are we supposed to go?

BILL: There is nowhere to go!

WIFE: Then what do we do? Rachel, come here, baby! Now! Bill! What do we do? Please tell me! Bill!

RACHEL: Daddy?

[*Fade to white*]

SCENE 4

[*Montage of images with voice-over*]

ANNOUNCER: It didn't have to be like this.

[*Footage of protesters*]

It could have been different.

[*Rachel's face in front of television, distraught parents, a Chinese rocket launching*]



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[*Computer image of missile shot from North Dakota intercepting a missile shot from the east Atlantic*]

In fact, our government has proven that it

[*Footage of a missile striking something and*

Don't let this opportunity slip through our fingers again.

[Scheme]

THE SUNSHINE PROBLEM

From the declassified transcript of a January 18, 1955, meeting of scientists participating in Project Sunshine, a worldwide effort, coordinated by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, to steal human corpses and body parts, preferably those of babies and young children, in order to measure the effects of fallout from nuclear tests. The scientists were particularly concerned with determining how much strontium 90 had contaminated the environment and how much was absorbed by the human body.

lected from hospitals in the United States, Australia, Britain, Canada, Hong Kong, and South America. Six thousand bodies were collected in the U.K. alone. Dr. Willard Libby of the University of Chicago directed the project. Libby won the Nobel Prize for Chemistry in 1960.

celerated program here. Weapons have tak-

this time. But the ultimate implication biologically of environmental contamination

In this conference the problem of strontium 90 is of special emphasis, and to lay out

ture. I think you will be partly pleased and partly disturbed at our present status.

I would like to turn the floor over to Dr. Libby now for his comments on our present program.

COMMISSIONER WILLARD LIBBY: Thank you, John. I am sure the importance of the Sunshine Project is obvious to all of you, but, to keep the record straight, I would like to say that there is no effort which the AEC is engaged in which to my mind is more important than this project. I think we can all feel quite proud that we have as much as we have, but there are very great gaps in the data, and it should be our prime objective to fill those holes.

By far the most important is human samples. We have been reduced to essentially zero level on the human samples. I don't know how to get them, but I do say that it is a matter of prime importance to get them and particularly in the young age-group.

It is clear, I think, from the data and from the systematics of the biosphere that adults are not of much interest, in that adults are not expected to pick up strontium 90 or to have picked it up, and, although we should from time to time check with adult materials, they will not in general serve our purposes.

We were fortunate, as you know, to obtain a large number of stillborn babies as material. This supply, however, has now been cut off and shows no signs, I think, of being rejuvenated. These were not perfect samples. These materials undoubtedly reflected the metabolic pool of the mother and were therefore low in their assay. It would seem to me that one- to three-year-old children would have a better tolerance. We have never had a single individual in this range.

I see other gaps which are very serious—the content of strontium 90 in the sea, the content of strontium 90 in rain, the content of strontium 90 at land level, in high-level atmospherics, and in ordinary air. We must have the whole world assay for strontium 90 with the objective of finding out its effect on human life.

So human samples are of prime importance, and if anybody knows how to do a good job of body snatching they will really be serving their country.

I don't know how to snatch bodies. In the original study in the summer of 1953, we hired an expensive law firm to look up the law of body snatching. This compendium is available to you. It is not very encouraging. It shows you how very difficult it is going to be to do it legally. We may be able to help—I speak now of the commission—in that we hope to downgrade the Sunshine classification. At least the existence of the project I

hope we will get away with revealing. Whether this is going to help in the body-snatching problem, I don't know. I think it will. It is a delicate problem in public relations, obviously. I don't know. This is a major objective.

DR. J. LAWRENCE KULP: Concerning this human material, we have excellent sources in three places for human material.

COMMISSIONER LIBBY: How big were the samples?

DR. KULP: Two to twenty grams.

COMMISSIONER LIBBY: But those were adults. The only ones that are of interest are the young ones. Is this true?

DR. HUGHES: No.

COMMISSIONER LIBBY: Why are adults interesting? There is no strontium in them.

DR. KULP: There is some strontium in the thirty-year-olds. It cuts off at about forty.

COMMISSIONER LIBBY: Really? How many Sunshine units?

DR. KULP: .1, .2. We have twenty to thirty samples completed now ranging from seventy down, and the levels are indeed dead at forty, and then the levels pick up. It happens these are the easiest to get.

The main point I wanted to bring up now is that we have the channels in these places where we are getting everything. We have three or four other leads where we could get complete age-range samples from other localities. These three are Vancouver, Houston, and New York. We could easily get them from Puerto Rico and other places. We can get virtually everyone that dies in this range.

COMMISSIONER LIBBY: These are operative materials?

DR. KULP: No. This is all deaths between one and thirty.

COMMISSIONER LIBBY: That is wonderful.

DR. KULP: We have twenty coming from Vancouver and twenty from Houston in this range that have already been taken. So the channel is there, and the samples are flowing in.

COMMISSIONER LIBBY: That is fine, Larry. Maybe you can reveal your technique to the other groups.

DR. FORREST WESTERN: It is perhaps worthwhile at this point to back off a little and try to orient ourselves as far as the Sunshine problem is concerned. We got started when we had a very simple and naive concept of atomic warfare. We pictured a large number of small atomic weapons detonated at a sufficient height to give the greatest blast damage. We were sure from that type of use there would be very little fallout and our problem was entirely a long-range problem, long range in distance and in time. The radioactive debris

[redacted]

HAMBURGER HELPER

From a list of accident reports on the website of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. According to [redacted] more than 25 percent of the nation's 150,000 meatpacking workers are injured or killed on the job each year.

Employee's Arm Amputated While Cleaning Meat Grinder

Employee Fall into Active Meat Blending Machine

Employee Committed Suicide by Jumping into a Meat Blender

Employee's Legs Amputated by Meat-Blender Blades

Employee Killed When Arm Caught in Meat Grinder

Employee Killed When Crushed by Descending Lid of Machine

Employee's Middle Finger Severed by Meat Saw

Employee Decapitated by Head Laceration from Flying Blade

Employee's Finger Amputated in Dicing Machine

Employee's Arm Severed by Knife of Meat-Slicing Machine

Employee Stabs Self with 8-Inch Butcher Knife and Dies

Employee's Finger Amputated in Sausage Extruder

Employee Injures Backside Jumping from Platform

Employee's Eye Injured When Struck by Flying Hook

Employee's Arm Amputated When Caught in Meat Tenderizer

Employee Burned in Tallow Fire

Employee Crushed and Killed by a Blender

Employee Killed in Fall from Handrail into Blender

Employee Decapitated by Chain of Hide-Puller Machine

Employee's Cornea Lacerated by Bacon Hook

Employee Killed When Head Caught in Fleshing Machine

Employee's Fingers Amputated by Sausage Packing Machine

Employee Caught and Killed by Gut Cooker Machine

Employee Killed by Stun Gun

Employee Killed While Boning a Hog

[illegible] up into the atmosphere and sift around all over the world. [illegible] question. What is the [illegible] that can be used under conditions of this sort without endangering the human race? Our studies have de[illegible]

Since then, we have developed very effec[illegible] superbomb that perhaps at the present time it would be impossible to det[illegible] sufficient height that there would not be a great deal of local fallout. So we have to consider now what will be the effect of large fractions of the radioactive material from these weapons falling out in nearby areas, within a few hundred miles downwind—one, two, three, four hundred miles.

[illegible] instead of now having one question, What is the total number of weapons that would be hazardous to the race, we now have two questions. I would put the second one foremost: What can we do to protect ourselves against the various [illegible]



Wrapped Face II, by Pamela Butler, can be seen at

ture now? For instance, at what stages will protection need to begin to permit us to survive under these conditions?

The high-level groups are frantically trying to find the answer to how many bombs we can detonate without producing monsters or else destroying the human race. The problems really become quite complex.

I want to say just for my own entertainment more or less that I personally do not think that it would be possible for the human race to wipe itself out of existence by methods of this sort. I think you will find a few Eskimos or a few Patagonians or a few people in some isolated part of the earth who will keep the race going. They might not populate the earth with just the descendants we would like to see. They might not be highly civilized like we are. They might not know anything about atomic warfare, for example. But I think the concept of wiping the race out with nuclear weapons is a little bit far-fetched.

DR. KULP: Regarding the data, our main emphasis this year has been on human samples. We have set up the following stations for complete sampling. We have a center at Vancouver, at Houston, and New York.

Down in Houston they don't have all these rules. They claim that they can get virtually—and they intend to get virtually—every death in the age range we are interested in that occurs in the city of Houston. They have a lot of poverty cases and so on. They have at least one or two mother-and-child pairs per month, which is an interesting thing to look at. So we intend to get this.

We have now told our people in the medical school to cut off here and only send us one or two in the forties every once in a while. They are now filling the gap between one and forty. We expect between ten and twenty samples per month of humans in this range from all three of these sources.

[illegible] Are these ribs?

DR. KULP: These are ribs. In the case of Houston we have gotten some leg bone because they don't have to worry how the individual looks when they get through. Most of the Houston stuff will be rib. But they actually did take out some pieces of leg.

Furthermore, before coming down to this conference, I talked at some length with the dean of the Columbia Medical School, and he has contacts all over the world where he is sure we can develop identical programs. In particular, in Australia, South America, Africa, in the Near East, and in Scandinavian countries. He has informed me that he has personal friends in enough of these places

that it would be rather a straightforward matter to make arrangements. It can be done.

DR. BUGHER: You seem to have had with these arrangements good success in getting material. It relieves one of the difficulties inherent in getting stillborn babies, which has been done chiefly in Chicago. To the extent that we can avoid obliterating the trace of the individual as an individual human being, the better off we are here. When people who have released a body for disposal change their minds and come back and decide they want the body after all, and then realize it is only represented by a few grams of ashes, they are likely sometimes to take a rather dim view of our procedures.

I would like to have more comment on this side of the program, because it is essential. We cannot really cut any corners.

DR. LYLE T. ALEXANDER: If you could get three-, four-, and five-year-old children, that would be good, because that is a little hard to come by.

DR. BUGHER: It should not be difficult, actually. Any large medical center could have quite a large number of autopsies of children. It is a question of getting to the people who can make such material available.

[Regrets]

EXTENDING AN APOLOGY

From a June 21 press conference held by Mel Lastman, the mayor of Toronto. Two weeks earlier, before visiting Mombasa, Kenya, to promote Toronto's bid to host the 2008 Olympics, Lastman told a reporter that he was "scared" to visit Mombasa because "I just see myself in a pot of boiling water with all these natives dancing around me."

Q: Mayor, do you think your comments hurt Toronto's Olympic bid?

MEL LASTMAN: I am truly sorry, and I'm going to say it again: I'm sorry that my comments were inappropriate. And I want to apologize to everyone for my remarks, particularly anyone who was offended by them.

Q: Is sorry enough? Should you resign at this point?

LASTMAN: I am sorry I made the remarks.

Q: But is sorry enough?

LASTMAN: I am sorry I made the remarks.

Q: What damage do you think you did to the Olympic bid?

LASTMAN: I'm sorry I made the remarks. My comments were inappropriate.

Q: That's not what I asked.

LASTMAN: That is my answer.

Q: How much damage have you done to a multicultural city as the mayor?

LASTMAN: I am truly sorry.

Q: Are you considering resigning?

LASTMAN: I am truly sorry I made those remarks.

Q: Are you considering resigning as a result of making those remarks?

LASTMAN: I am truly sorry I made those remarks.

Q: Are you considering resigning?

LASTMAN: I am truly sorry.

Q: What else can you add in terms of damage control? Bob Richardson [of the Toronto bid committee] said they are getting calls from around the world. What are you guys doing about damage control?

LASTMAN: I am truly sorry I made the remarks. My comments were inappropriate.

Q: Are you going to continue to go to Europe and lobby for the bid and stuff as planned?

LASTMAN: I am very sorry about the remarks.

Q: Are you very sorry about the remarks you made?

JIM WARREN [Lastman's press spokesman]: It's not funny.

Q: There are people in the city who are from Kenya, there are people of African descent in the city. Just to be sorry does not explain why you did this. Why did you make this comment?

LASTMAN: I am sorry I made the remarks, and my comments were completely inappropriate. And I want to apologize to anybody who was offended by them.

Q: Mayor Lastman, did you have a head-slapping moment when you thought you shouldn't have said what you did?

LASTMAN: It was just the wrong thing to say, and I am sorry I said it. I mean, what do you want from me, except I'm sorry? I've apologized. I did the wrong thing.

Did you say? You made a mistake.

LASTMAN: Of course I did. That's why I'm apologizing.

I think what a multicultural city like Toronto wants to know is why you made it in the first place.

LASTMAN: I'm sorry I made the remarks.

WARREN: Thanks.

Q: What can you do to make amends, do you think?

LASTMAN: I'm sorry I made the remarks.

WARREN: Thanks, guys.

Q: Mr. Mayor, do you think your comments were racist, and are you a racist?

LASTMAN: I am sorry I made the remarks. And I

propriate and I again apologize for anyone

[Dialogue]

HOMELESS MAN INTERVIEWS HIMSELF

world's oldest active homeless newspaper."

Hello, my name is Albert Bliss. I am sitting on a long park bench across the street from Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen, located in Manhattan on 9th Avenue on West 28th Street. I have just finished lunch and I'm about to begin interviewing myself. Since the interviewer and interviewee are the same person, I have split myself in two. I will call the interviewer Mister Bliss and the interviewee Al.

AL: I am five feet ten inches tall and weigh 210 pounds. I am a homosexual, and I am HIV-negative. I like to smoke pot, but I am not a drug addict. I like to drink beer and often abuse the liquid. I like to loiter on park benches and talk to myself. I walk far distances. If there were a homeless marathon, I believe that I would take the gold in the long-distance walking event. Sometimes I walk around the border of Manhattan, starting at the Brooklyn Bridge, making my way north to the George Washington Bridge. It does not matter how long it takes. Last time it took me fifteen days.

MISTER BLISS: How long have you been homeless?

AL: Four years.

MISTER BLISS: Did you ever think you would be homeless?

AL: When I was a kid growing up in Newark, New Jersey, I saw homeless men all the time. I used to wonder, Where do they sleep, how do they get food, where do they go when they need to change their clothing?

Some days I would see this older white man in Branch Brook Park. There was nothing special about him really. He was around fifty years old. He had short stumps for legs and always wore long baggy pants that he never cuffed. He had little hair and always tied a green neckerchief around his head. I had behind a tree and watched the chief.

Usually he was reading a discarded paper or rifling through a garbage can, drinking a beer from a big brown bottle or talking and answering himself as if he were two people. I never thought low of the chief because he was drinking a beer before school started. I knew there were reasons he did what he did, I just didn't know them. Other days, on my way home from school, I saw the chief chewing the rag and laughing with other trampy vagrants. Sometimes the poor men had a fire going in a park ash can, warming their hands and faces in winter. In the summertime they would cook hot dogs over the portable grill. I remember feeling jealous of their carefree lifestyle. No one to answer to and no rules to follow seemed to me like the best kind of life.

Many years have passed. I'm forty-five years old now, but I never forget my homeless chief and his trampy friends from Branch Brook Park.

MISTER BLISS: Are you suggesting that the vagrant you spied on in a Newark park was a sort of hero during your adolescence?

AL: Yes.

MISTER BLISS: That's an interesting point of view. Most people would not think of a homeless idler as a worthy identification figure. Indeed, most New Yorkers would say that a city bum would be the worst role model a schoolchild could follow.

AL: Even though I was only twelve years old, I thought of these homeless riffraff as rugged individualists. I equated these men with great American pioneers I was studying in school, guys like Daniel Boone, Davy Crockett, and Jim Bowie. As I peeked at the men from behind that huge tree trunk I thought to myself, they had to be brave to camp outside, under the stars and moon every night. Though untidy and foul-mouthed, these sturdy outdoorsmen became my fearless real-life heroes. Of course I knew that they were poor and broken down. Of course I knew that they abused alcohol and didn't go to work. I was hiding behind the tree, but I wasn't hiding from the truth.

MISTER BLISS: Do you still consider "homeless riffraff" rugged individualists?

AL: Yes.

MISTER BLISS: Interesting.

AL: A man becomes a vagrant for different reasons. There are two groups of vagrants, basically. Both abuse drugs and drink but for different reasons. There's the vagrant who got frustrated and disgusted keeping up with the Joneses. These men got bored with the nine-to-five jig and now they drink and snort because there is nothing else to do. Then there

The Birth of the Modern Mind

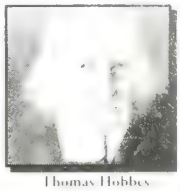
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[illegible]

FREE CATALOG

have had a serious one-to-one confrontation with [illegible]. These men are cynical [illegible] who dress like social losers and [illegible] because they see no purpose to existence. The second group turns to substance abuse because life is pointless.

[illegible]: What did you have for lunch?

AL: Hot dogs, beans, and salad. There was also a slice of chocolate cake, but I gave that away.

MISTER BLISS: Would you please describe a typical day?

AL: [illegible] they throw the light switch at the rescue mission. I got dressed, straightened out my bunk-bed sheets, and folded the blanket. After I brushed my teeth I got in line. A hundred guys filed down three flights of stairs to [illegible] meal, two buttered bagels, and drank hot tea. From six-thirty to ten-thirty, I waited at an employment agency for a per diem job, then took a spot at the end of Holy Apostle's soup line. After lunch I walked up to the Port Authority bus terminal and made a few bucks carrying travelers' luggage from Greyhound buses out to yellow cabs. I bought a bottle with the money I earned and drank some booze in Bryant Park. I chilled there until four o'clock and then made my move downtown. When I reached the mission I put my name on the lottery sheet for a bed, found a seat in the chapel, and waited for service to begin. What's the plan for today? [illegible] bus to cab. I need to make some coins.

MISTER BLISS: If food and shelter are free why [illegible]

AL: I work to get jingle for liquor, cigarettes, and bus tickets. I like to travel. I also work per diem jobs to keep my mind off the "hot [illegible] come from? Who am I? Where am I going?

[illegible] I used to keep myself busy, the way working people do, so that I would not be alone. Is this all there is? I tried to blot out the dis[illegible] That did nothing to quell my anguish. I tried [illegible] curriculum. That didn't work either. I did [illegible]s. But the relentless ques[illegible]

[illegible] reach a big city, I [illegible] ful. When I'm broke and hungry and night is falling fast I must find my way to safety.

MISTER BLISS: You refer to street people as fearless. Could you explain?

AL: A neglected aspect of the homeless lifestyle is a street man's persistent awareness of death. Street bums are brave individuals because they risk their lives, whether on the road or in their home state. A peaceful vagrant can do a face-to-face with a box blade as he stands in line with his food tray at Bowery Mission cafeteria. The homeless brother sleeping off a drunk in L.A.'s MacArthur Park can turn up strangled to death. A poor man waiting to get a bed at New Orleans's Ozanam Inn might suddenly find himself fighting for his life. At any time, at any place, the bad can go down and—poof! Constant danger is the homeless man's shadow.

MISTER BLISS: Well, we have come to the end of this interview. I want to thank you for your time and answers.

AL: Thank you.

[Necessities]

DON'T BRING ME DOWN

The following businesses are among 9,239 that applied to the California Public Utilities Commission last June to be exempt from the state's rotating power outages. According to the commission, in order to avoid outages, which last an average of 90 to 120 minutes, applicants must demonstrate that such an interruption will "pose a significant threat to public health or safety."

7 Lakes Country Club
A Better You Plastic Surgery Medical Group
All Evez On Me Hair Studio
Amity Pen Company, Inc.
Anheuser-Busch Sales of San Diego
Anytime Towing
Baseline Whatta Steak
Baskin-Robbins
Beverly Hills Liquor & Deli
Big Burrito Kingdom
Boom Boom Room
Burger King
Busy Bee Quality Cleaners
Caruthers Raisin Packing Co., Inc.
Cash It Here, Inc.
Church of Scientology Mission of San Francisco
City of Beverly Hills
College Soap Opera 24 Hour Laundry & Deli
Critters of the Cinema
Crumbs of Paris



The Ballad Superman, Noah Bliss St. Station [illegible]

Crusty Tart Bakery
Crystal Magic
Doty Donuts
El Taco Loco
Fuanto Drive In Liquor
Expert Nails
Fantastic Burgers
Five Cities Swim Club
Gardana Bowling Center
Genzyme Genetics
Gucci America Incorporated
Happy Teriyaki and Sandwiches
House of Blues
Imagynnation Gymnastics Center
Italy's Italian Restaurant Inc.
Jehovah's Witnesses
L.A. Dance Connection
Las Dos Victorias Candy
Lortons Fresh Squeezed Juices, Inc.
Los Gatos Swim & Racquet Club
Mr. Ralph's Cafe
Pacific Coast Chocolates
Pinoy-Pinay Filipino Fastfood Restaurant
Poochies Barkhouse
Quality Discount Ice Cream, Inc.
Rodeo Land Co.
SeaWorld
Sharpshooter Range
Sick Dogs Tattoo
Snowy Pines Christmas Trees
Steve Irving Swimwear of America
Stevie G's Prime Time Pizza
T-Shirt Mart
Uptown Laundry Co. Wash
Valencia Pancakes, Inc.

[Stories]

NO NEED TO STARVE

Five stories from The Devil's Larder, *by the* [illegible]

[illegible]

Some [illegible] bel on the can. There are two glassy lines of [illegible] the label was. The cat's [illegible] number [illegible]

ends. Top or bottom end? No one can tell what's up or down. The metal isn't very old.

[illegible] it out. It might be salmon—not cheap. Or tuna steaks. Or rings of syruped pineapple. Too good to waste. Guava [illegible] soup. Skinned Italian plum tomatoes. Of course, they ought to open up the can and have a look, and eat the contents there and then. Or plan a meal around it. It must be something that they like, or used to like. It's in their larder. It had a label once. They chose it in the shop.

They shake the can against their ears. They sniff at it. They compare it with the other cans inside the larder to find a match in size and shape. But still they cannot tell if it is beans or fruit or fish. They are like children with unopened birthday gifts. Will they be disappointed when they open up the can? Will it be what they want? Sometimes their humor is macabre: the contents are beyond description—baby flesh, sliced fingers, dog waste, worms, the venom of a hundred lizards—and that is why there is no label.

One night when there are guests and all the wine has gone, they put the can into the candle light amongst the debris of their meal and play the guessing game. An aphrodisiac, perhaps; "Let's try." A plague. Should they open it up and spoon it out? A tune, canned music, something never heard before that would rise from the open can, evaporate, and not be heard again. The elixir of youth. The human soup of DNA. A devil or a god?

It's tempting just to stab it with a knife. Wound it. See how it bleeds. What is the color [illegible]

We all should have a can like this. Let it rust. Let the rims turn rough and brown. Lift it up and shake it if you want. Shake its sweetness or its bitterness. Agitate the juicy heaviness within. The gravy heaviness. The brine, the soup, the oil, the sauce. The heaviness. The choice is wounding it with knives, or never [illegible]

◆

Here is a question for your guests, next time you dine with new acquaintances at home. The coffee has been served. You sit not quite at ease, confronted by the detritus of empty plates and by the awkwardness of strangers. You say, to break the ice, Imagine it. You're on a raft, the two of you, three days from any land. Everybody else has drowned. The sea is calm; it's hardly trembling the raft. The four horizons offer you no hope of rescue. The skies are absolutely blue. Bad news. Blue skies provide no rain. The empty can you've found aboard the raft will not fill up with rain before eternity. You're bound to die of thirst within three days, before there's any chance of being washed up on a shore, unless you drink. You have to make a choice. What do you drink to save your lives? Seawater, or your own urine? Will you take piss or brine? Decide. You're caught between the devil and the salt blue sea. Don't hesitate to say.

I promise you, the woman always takes the devil. It does not bother her, that piss contains her body waste, the excess, sterile toxins of her complicated life. She is at ease with body fluids, blemishes, has to be, she deals with them throughout her years. She finds salvation in herself, collects the urine in the can, and drinks.

The husband—again I promise you—selects the sea, invariably. He knows the dangers of the salt. They say it dries your blood and drives you mad. The water makes you thirstier so you drink even more. But still a man can't face the poisons in his life. He'd rather die. He finds salvation in the seven tenths. He dips the can into the sea and drinks.

Which of the two survives, do you suppose? The woman obviously. She must outlive the man. Her own bladder is soon empty, but the ocean is endless. Her husband's lips are white with salt not thirst. She has a second chance through him. She makes her husband get his penis out and—despite his protests of disgust—he fills the can for her. His water is quite clear. Not salty either. His kidneys have removed the salt. So long as he drinks sea, preferring universe to self, she will survive unscathed.

There are no shores. There are no rescue boats. No rain.

◆

Eggs, thank heavens, are still plentiful though not cheap. We buy them sanctioned with the guarantee, printed on their cartons, that These eggs have been produced by hens that are: Protected from extremes of heat and cold; Free from hunger and thirst; Free to range and forage on green pasture from dawn to dusk; Free from pain, injury, and disease; Free from fear and distress; Free from discomfort; Free to express themselves.

In these hard times, in these slow months between the winter and the rain, we are reduced to sharing eggs, a three-egg omelette for the six of us, fried eggs divided into two or three for sandwiches, a family meal of rice with grated cheese and a single egg for flavoring, or soft-boiled eggs, two children to each spoon. We have developed ways of making do.

We sit at night around the single gas fire in the kitchen, our plates wiped dry with bread, discussing endlessly the greater times ahead, how our misfortunes cannot last for good. We dream of work and cash and ranging free. The day will come when there is sunshine in the yard, when all our offspring will be well.

We stay at home and contemplate the life of hens.

•

No need to starve. When we were big enough, our parents let us wander in the hills behind the village. We knew the taste of everything—the salty gypsum in the rocks, the peachy flavors in the leaves of morning star, the sulphur of a pigeon's egg, boiled in the furnace of the sand. We knew where water was.

Sometimes we begged my uncle for some matches and some cigarettes—to catch scrub fowls. Smoke is better than a catapult, we said. We told him how we'd sit underneath the bushes in the riverbed and wait for a donkey or a sheep to come down for the leaves. A goat would do. We'd have to blow smoke from his cigarettes into its ears and wait for ticks to show themselves in the folds of skin. The grey or blackish ticks weren't any good. We needed one which was red-brown, bloated with sheep or donkey blood. We couldn't grip the tick and twist its jaws free of the skin without its body popping on our fingertips. But, with luck, with one more cigarette, smoke might make it drop free of the ear. We'd have to catch the tick before it hit the ground or it would burst.

Then it was simple. All we had to do was pull a length of cotton from the bottom of our shirts, lasso the tick and put it on a stone out in the sun, then tie the free end of the cotton to a branch. We'd find a cool place underneath the bush. We wouldn't have to count to ten before a scrub fowl came. It loved the blood bean of a tick. The captive tick, the cotton line, went down its throat in one. We'd snared our meal.

We must be patient, we told our uncle. It can take an hour just to catch our tick. But then it only takes five minutes to trap the bird, and five minutes in the fire to roast it. That must be hard, he said, to catch a donkey or a sheep and then persuade it to stay still while hot smoke tunnels in its ear. We shrugged. We laughed. We begged my uncle for his matches and his cigarettes.

It's true, we did sit down below the bushes in the riverbed. But we did not care for dining out on scrub fowl. We did not hunt for ticks, or look for sheep and donkeys. We smoked my uncle's cigarettes one at a time, passing them between us so that the smoke was never idle. Smoke is better than a catapult, we said. We filled our mouths and stomachs up with smoke. We fed on cigarettes. We loved the peach and salt and sulphur in the nicotine, the ashy meat and wood. We waited while our appetites fell free, and hit the stony ground, and burst.

•

A youngish man, a trifle overweight, too anxious for his age, completed his circuit of the supermarket shelves and cabinets and stood in line at the till.

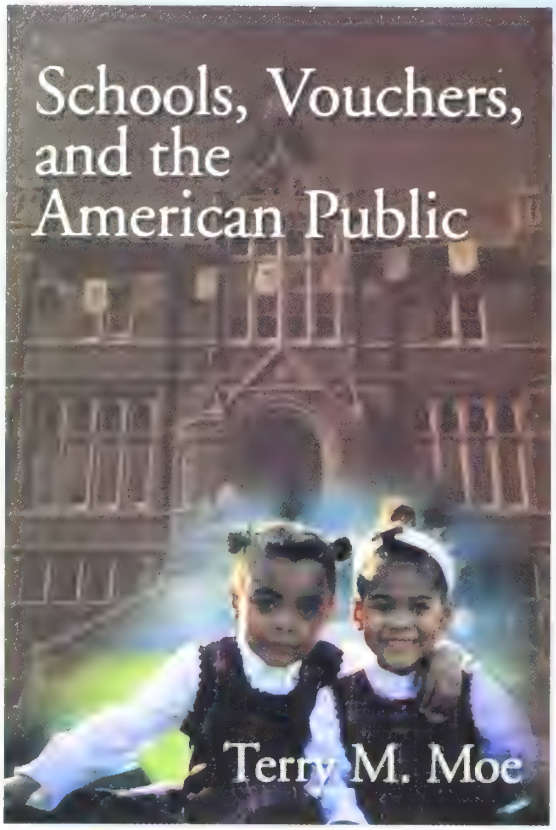
He arranged his purchases on the checkout belt and waited, with his eyes fixed on the street beyond the window, while the woman at the till scanned all the codes and prices on his medicines, his vitamins, his air freshener, his toilet tissue, his frozen Meals for One, his tins, his magazines, his beer and his deodorant, his bread, bananas, milk, his Fat Free yoghurt, his jar of decaf and his treats: today some roasted chicken legs, some grapes, a block of chocolate and two croissants. He rubbed his thumb along the embossed numbers of his credit card while each item triggered a trill of recognition from the till.

The till's computer recognized the young man's Distinctive Shopping Fingerprint as well, the usual ratio of fat to starch, the familiar selection of canned food, the recent and increasing choice of health supplements, the unique combination of monthly magazines. The pattern of the shopping identified the customer. Even before the woman at the till had swiped the credit card, the computer had lined up the young man's details—his list of purchases for the previous seven months, his credit rating, his Customer Loyalty score. It knew broadly who he was and how he lived. It could deduce what his modest rooms above the travel shop were like, how stale they were, how flowerless, how functional, how crying out for change. Here was the man whose cat had died or run away three months ago. No cat food purchased since that time. Here was the customer who had not left the neighborhood for more than seven days in living, byte-sized memory. Last spring, he'd tried and failed to cut down on his intake of fat and sugar. Today, for once, he had resisted his usual impulse purchase of a packet of cheroots.

Computer screened a message on the woman's till: Cheroots . . . Cheroots . . . it said. Remind the customer he has not purchased cereals or cheese or vegetables this month. Remind him of our special offers: 12 cans of lager for the price of 10. Buy one bottle of our Boulevard Liqueur and get a second free. Remind him that time is passing more quickly than he thinks—his washing powder should have run out now, as should the contraceptives that he bought two years ago. He must need basics, such as rice and pasta, soap, toothpaste, flour, oil, and condiments. Inform him of our Retail Scheme and that we open now on Sunday afternoons. Advise him that he ought to do more cooking for himself. He ought to tidy up and clean the bathroom tiles with [illegible]. He ought to start afresh. Suggest to him he tour out [illegible]. We're [illegible] is what we are. He should not miss this second opportunity [illegible]

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

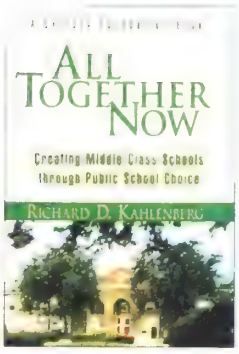
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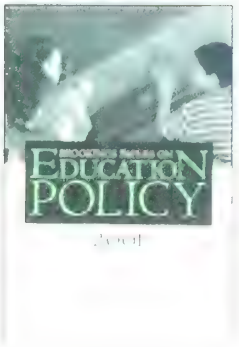
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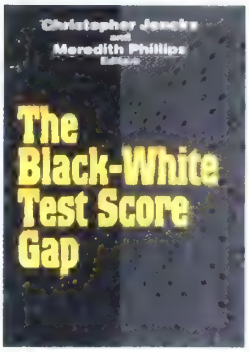
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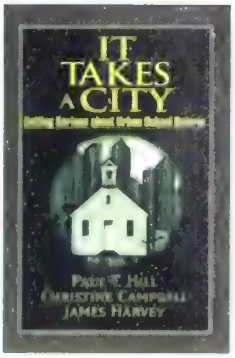
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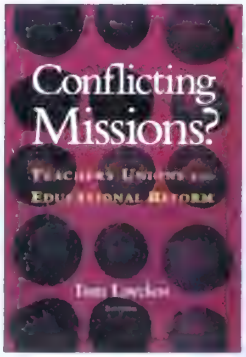
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WHY WE HATE TEACHERS

Notes on a noble American tradition

By Garret Keizer

Glory, glory, alleluia
Teacher hit me with a ruler.
I knocked her on the beam
With a rotten tangerine,
And she ain't gonna teach no more.

"Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory of the Burning of the School" (Traditional)

As soon as I entered first grade, I began throwing up my breakfast every day, Monday through Friday, usually two or three minutes before the school bus came. I do not recall having what are nowadays referred to as "academic difficulties." In fact, I was already the good student I would continue to be right through graduate school. Nor do I recall being picked on in any particular way; that would come later. What I recall is being struck at about the same time as my mother handed me my lunch with an irresistible urge to vomit my breakfast—that, and the sight of my mother on her knees again, wiping up my mess.

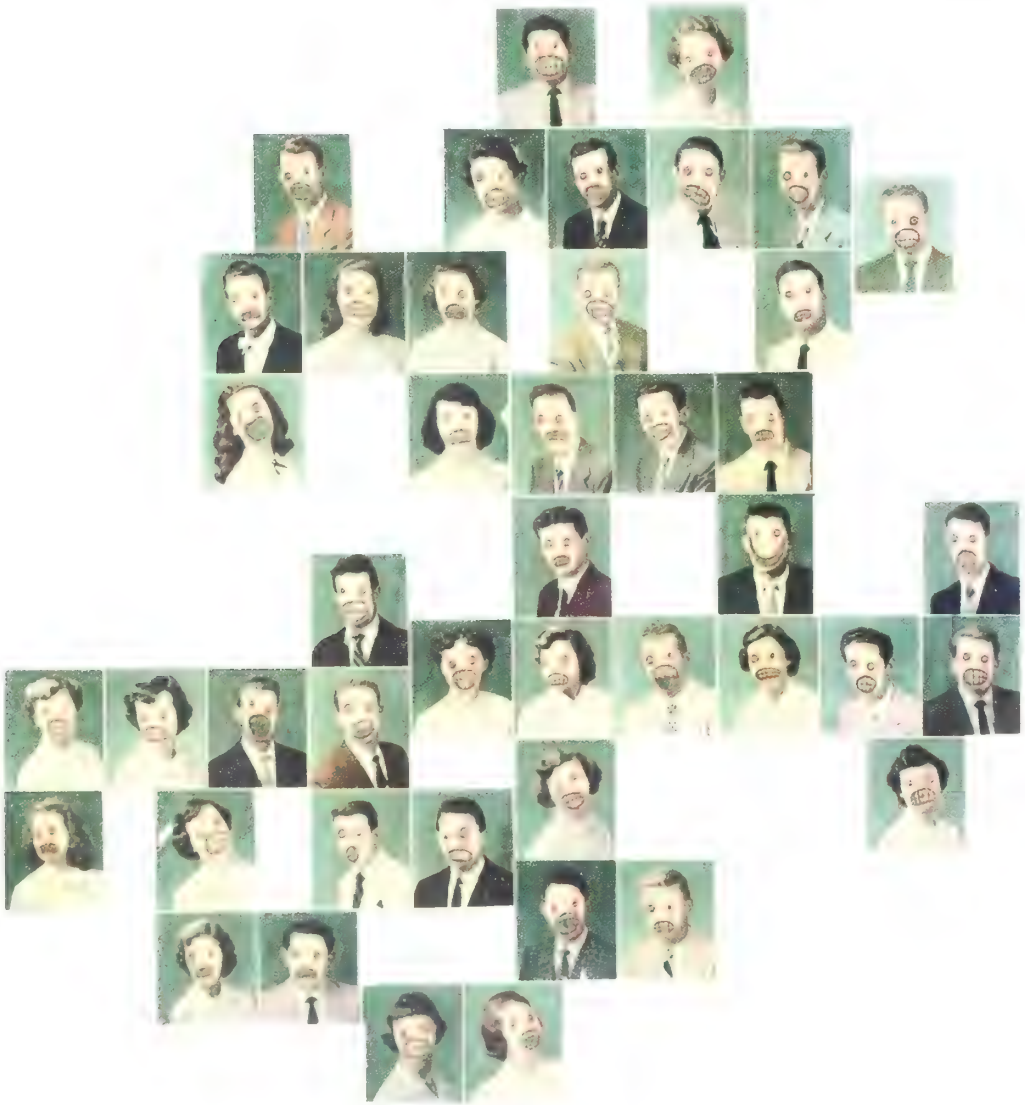
I have long since marveled at the way in which my parents, without benefit of formal courses in psychology or any thought of sending me to a psychologist (this was 1959), set about trying to cure me by a psychological stratagem at once desperate, risky, and ingenious. It amounted to the contrivance of an epiphany. One evening they announced that the next day I would not be going to school. Instead, my mother and I would be taking a trip "up country" to see Aunt Em and have a picnic. Aunt Em and her husband were caretakers of a sprawling rural cemetery in which I delighted to play and explore. They lived in a house "as old as George Washington." Propped against one of their porch pillars was an enormous Chiclet-shaped rock, an object of great fascination for me, which they claimed was a petrified dinosaur tooth. There were few places on earth I would rather have gone.

The next morning arrived like an early Christmas. I watched impatiently as my mother packed a lunch for our adventure. Then, just at the time when the school bus would have picked me up, she turned to me and in a tone of poignant resignation said, "Now, you see, Gary, there is nothing wrong with your stomach. You get sick because you don't want to go to school." She handed me my lunch and told me that we were not going to Aunt Em's that day. I did not throw up. I forget whether or not I cried. But, for the most part, I was cured.

I say for the most part because even now, at the age of forty-eight, I am rarely able to

Contributing editor Garret Keizer's last article for Harper's Magazine was "Sound and Fury." His book No Place But Here, and A Dresser of Sycamore Trees, a memoir and a novel, will be published this winter by HarperCollins. His essay "Sound and Fury" appeared in the March issue of Harper's Magazine. Some of the ideas in this essay were originally published in Orion.

the same duodenal ominousness that haunted [illegible] incident. I don't [illegible] in this, though it does seem like an odd symptom for someone who went to school for almost twenty years, who taught high school for fifteen years after that, who saw his wife through graduate school after she had done the same for him, and who will be in his mid-fifties [illegible] college. I have spent most of my life "in school," doing homework or correcting it, which means that for much of my life I have either skipped breakfast or eaten it as an act of faith.



And I still catch myself thinking of that aborted trip to Aunt Em's. I picture myself running over the mown graves, past generations of polished monuments, with a cool breeze at my [illegible]

above me. It amounts to a waking dream, wit[h] a dream's psychic symbolism, and what I thin[k] it means is that I have reconciled myself [to] death by imagining it as the most sublime for[m] of [illegible]. the blessed stage at which, no or[e] will ever again, in any form whatsoever, make me go to school.

I do not have frightful memories of my firs[t] grade teacher, though my parents have told m[e] she was "stern." I remember her punishing [a] boy who'd meandered into the girls' bathroo[m] by forcing him to wear a cardboard sign tha[t] read I AM A GIRL TODAY. I remember anothe[r] boy, a budding Leonardo da Vinci, whos[e] crammed, cluttered desk she would fro[m] time to time dump ove[r] onto the floor, like a[n] unfaithful wife's ward[-] robe tossed onto th[e] street. I can still s[ee] him kneeling among h[is] precocious drawing[s] and playground-exca[-] vated fossils, straighten[-] ing things up as best [he] he could, while the re[st] of us looked on wit[h] the dumbstruck fascin[a]tion of smaller-brained primates. I can see thes[e] things clearly, but I d[o] not remember th[e] teacher herself as a[n] ogre. As for the memo[-] ries of my two class[-] mates, the first of whom would eventually be[-] come an outlaw bike[r] and the second [of] whom probably went on through a long pro[-] gression of larger an[d] even messier desks, I a[m] not so sure.

Such stories of cru[el] and unusual punish[-] ment probably accoun[t] at least partially for th[e] hideous strain of Ame[r]ican folk humor, with [a] pedigree that runs fro[m] Washington Irving t[o] Garrison Keillor: th[e] Tale of the Teacher We Drove Nuts. I used t[o] know a man who would tell me, in the tone [of] someone bragging about his first sexual exper[i]ence, how he and his friends had driven a nu[n] at his Catholic school to a nervous breakdow[n]

's put it this way: She didn't come back the
t year." It so happens that I was working as
acher when I first heard the story. So was
man who told it to me.

's hard to imagine a parallel from an-
er profession, perhaps some folksy yarn
it an undertaker driven to tears by a
ated switcheroo of his embalming fluid
his coffee, a cashier who fell down
ning at the mouth after making change
ne too many ten-pound bags of dimes.
simplistic to say that we see these tales
nnocuous because their protagonists
only children. We also see them as in-
uous because their victims are only
hers (and usually women). We like to
these stories, I think, because they re-
quite some primal—as in "pri-
mary" school—pain within us

For many children, going to school
unts to a fall from grace. I have long sensed
ystical connection between the iconic ap-
on the teacher's desk and the apple Adam
t from the forbidden tree. I am tempted to
them for the same apple. Perhaps the New
land Puritans who taught their children the
habet starting with the A in "Adam's Fall"
e playing with the same idea. Although
hers may figure variously in the myth as
, the Serpent, or God, they are almost al-
s the flaming cherubim who bar our return
he innocence of early childhood. For better
or worse, a teacher was our first surrogate
her. The wicked stepmother and the fairy
godmother are *mothers*, after all, and in the
tales of personal history they both tend to
e teaching licenses. In other words, the sto-
of our first encounter with school is either
tale of how we betrayed our mothers for a
cess or the tale of how they abandoned us
witch.

nd the last chapter mirrors the first: the
her who took us from our mothers ap-
's in another guise to take our children
us later on. The teacher who is a boy's
crush is also his mother's first rival. Fur-
more, in an era when mothers frequently
k outside the home, a teacher with the
efit of a shorter day and a longer summer
ation not only spends the best hours of
day with our children; she spends the
htest days of the year with her own. I be-
e this accounts for much of the disdain for
hers, particularly in working-class com-
nities like mine. If someone gave me the
er and the money to make one change
might improve the public perception of
hers, I would give working parents more
with their kids. At the very least, that
would remind them to be grateful for the
hours their kids are in school.

There are, of course, other ways in which
schools represent a psychic fall; and teachers,
the guardian angels of its trajectory. Although
schools in a democracy purport to exist for the
creation of "a level playing field," it does not
take us long to discover that level playing fields
exist mainly to sort out winners from losers.
Unless we came from a large family with par-
ents who went out of their way to play fa-
vorites, school was our first introduction to the
idea of relative merit. It is not an idea with as
much application to the so-called real world as
we might think. Neither are any number of
schoolhouse rigors justified in that name. Cer-
tainly we encounter relative merit in the
world. My work as an adult is evaluated and re-
warded, and I must face the fact that others are
going to be better at it than I am.

But that oppressive sense of minute grada-
tion, of success not as a mansion of many
rooms but as a ladder of infinite rungs—where
does that exist but in a classroom, or in the
imagination of the adult who still sits there?
To be a kid again, I must walk to my assigned
place in a room ranked with little desks, each
occupied by a writer my age, or as he was at
my age. And the Updike kid always has his
hand up first, and the teacher can't seem to
get enough of his stories about rabbits, where-
as my poems about turtles always seem to lag
behind in her esteem. "Taking your degree" is
the most precise phrase in all of education:
that is what we take from our first day in
kindergarten, our *degree* of relative worth. The
educational apple of Adam's Fall, by which
the first American primer said "we sinned all,"
did not give us the knowledge of good and
evil but of good, better, and best, world with-
out end.

Another way in which our teachers took us
out of the Garden was by taking us out of the

[I]t would only be right and proper that for every gulden *you gave for the war against the Turks, you should give 100* guldens *for the schools, even if they (the Turks) were already at our throats, so that you might be able to educate at least one boy with this sum so that he would become a true Christian.*

— MARTIN LUTHER (1524)

began its incessant bullying of the present and [illegible]. The watchword was "preparation," and, considered only by the criterion of effective pedagogy, the watchword could hardly be called progressive. Ask a random sample of parents if and when school began to grow sour for their kids, and they will usually say "sometime around fourth or fifth grade"; that is, when teachers began working with a more intentional zeal to "get kids ready for high school," a process that might be likened to getting Sir John Gielgud ready to do a Pepsi commercial. Diminishment follows diminishment, until we reach graduate school, where the ability and certainly the desire to teach are not only rare but generally held in contempt. Few can go that far without developing grave suspicions about the future—perhaps one reason why so many people end up stalled in graduate school. The Serpent promised that we would become "as gods," though it seems that what he really meant is that with the right amount of training and gumption we could become as serpents.

For some of us that meant we could become teachers. We could bring the process of

If nothing is to be exacted from children by way of obedience it follows that they will only learn what they feel to be of actual and present advantage, either because they like it, or because it is of use to them. Otherwise, what motive would they have for learning?

—JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU (1762)

preparation full circle, like the myth of the serpent that devours its own tail. That is, admittedly, a paradoxical image. To be a teacher in America is to embody any number of seeming contradictions, some peculiar to the profession and others intrinsic to the nature of democracy itself.

For one thing, teachers can find themselves an embarrassing exception to the first article of their own creed: that education prepares one to be privileged and prosperous. Of the professional classes, theirs is probably one of the least esteemed; it is certainly one of the least paid. Teaching has traditionally been a port of entry, the Ellis Island by which the children of blue-collar workers entered the professional classes. I seldom see a first-year teacher with her tote bag or briefcase without conjuring up the age of an immigrant and his duffel bag worldly belongings—so full of faith, so free cynicism, so ripe for exploitation. And such easy target for prejudice.

Occupying a no-man's-land between union hall and the reserved parking space, a in some cases to take a sabbatical but in m cases unable to get to a toilet, teachers so times find themselves caught in a crossfire contradictory resentments. On the one ha the public expects teachers to have some of same expertise and even some of the same p ish as physicians, though no teacher of my quaintance has ever had the opportunity of ing his own nurse in the form of a classro aide—assuming he even had one. On the ot hand, those who see teachers as no more th a highly specialized class of clock-punchers prone to ask what truck driver ever had a ni week vacation, or what waitress ever ha pension fund.

It almost goes without saying tha teacher's perceived status will vary with status of the perceiver. So to the svelte m in the Volvo, Ms. Hart is an air-headed t without a creative bone in her body, w probably had to write crib notes all over chubby little hand just to get through H hum State College with a C. To the bu dad in the rusty pickup truck, Ms. Har a book-addled flake without a practi bone in her body but with plenty of g teeth in her head thanks to a dental p that comes out of said dad's property t es. In Shakespeare's *King Henry VI* common rebel known as Dick the But er says, "The first thing we do, let's kill the lawyers," but to honor the sentime inside as well as outside the palace M Hart has to die first.

Of course there are any number of p ents, in Volvos, old Fords, and on Harl Davidsons, who will see Ms. Hart as an ang And of those who see otherwise, might at le a few be responding to her pedagogical comp tence rather than to her professional stat Undoubtedly so. Teachers probably provi some of the most and least inspiring examp we have of human beings in the act of work. friend of mine remarked to me recently, "I one, not even a farmer, works harder thar hardworking teacher. But there is nothing this earth lazier than a lazy teacher." Havi taught school for a good part of my adult life tend to agree. I wouldn't say that extremes this kind are unique to teachers, however would propose that the same extremes can found in any occupation that shares the follo ing characteristics: a notable degree of speci



A GOOD *School* deserves to be call'd, the very *Salt* of the Town, that hath it. And the *Pastors* of every Town, (who are, *Sal Terræ*,) are under peculiar obligations, to make this a part of their *Pastoral Care*. That they may have a Good *School*, in their Neighbourhood. A woful *putrefaction* threatens the Rising *Generation;* Barbarous *Ignorance*, and the unavoidable consequence of it, Outrageous *Wickedness* wil make the Rising *Generation* Loathsome, if it have not Schools to preserve it. But *Schools*, wherein the *Youth* may by able *Masters* be Taught the Things that are necessary to qualify them for future *Serviceableness*, and have their *Manners* therewithal well-formed under a Laudable *Discipline*, & be over & above *Well-Catechised* in the principles of Religion. Those would be a *Glory* of our Land, & the preservatives of all other *Glory*.

The *Minister*, that shall give his Neighbours No Rest, until they have agreeable *Schools* among them, and that shall himself also at some Times *Inspect* & *Visit the Schools*, will therein do much towards Fulfilling that part of his Ministry, *Feed my Lambs*; & his Neighbours under his Charge, will (whatever they think of it!) have cause to Bless God, for this Expression of his Faithfulness.

But these are not the only persons, to whom *this matter belongs*; *The Civil Authority*, & the whole *Vicinity*, cannot be True to their own Interest, if they do not say, *We also will be with thee*.

When the REFORMATION began, in *Europe*, an hundred and fourscore years ago, to Erect *Schools* every where, was one principal concern of the Glorious & Heroic *Reformers*; & it was a common thing even for Little Villages of Twenty or Thirty Families, in the midst of all their Charges, & their Dangers, to maintain one of them. The *Colonies* of *New England* were planted on the Design of pursuing that Holy *Reformation*; & now the *Devil* cannot give a greater Blow to the *Reformation* among us, than by causing *Schools* to Languish under Discouragements. If our *General Courts*, decline to contrive and provide *Laws* for the Support of *Schools*; or if particular *Towns* Employ their Wits, for Cheats to Elude the wholesome *Laws*; little do they consider how much they expose themselves to that Rebuke of God, *Thou hast destroyed thy self, O New England*. . . .

If you have any Love to God, & Christ & Posterity; let *Schools* be more Encouraged. If you would not betray your Posterity into the very Circumstances of *Savages*, let *Schools* have more Encouragement. But in the Anguish . . . of Success to be otherwise found by this Address, I will Turn it from you unto the Almighty *Hearer of Prayer*.

And, O thou Saviour, and Shepherd of thy *New-English Israel*: Be Entreated Mercifully to look down upon thy Flocks in the Wilderness. Oh, give us not up to the Blindness and Madness of neglecting the Lambs in the Flocks. Inspire thy People, and all Orders of men among thy People, with a just care for the Education of Posterity. Let Well-Ordered, and well-instructed, and well-maintained Schools, be the Honour and the Defence of our Land. Let Learning, and all the Helps and Means of it, be precious in our Esteem and by *Learning*, let the Interests of thy Gospel so prevail, that we may be made wise unto *Salvation*. Save us, O our Lord *JESUS CHRIST*. Save us from the Mischiefs and Scandals of an Uncultivated Off-Spring: Let this be a Land of Light, until Thou, O Sun of Righteousness, do thy self arise unto the World with Healing in thy Wings.

AMEN.

COTTON MATHER
An Address, Ad Fratres in Eremo
(1699)

...trining, a mission to help other human ...ings, a duty to help them irrespective of their ...ity to pay, and a measure of authority that ...nes from all of the above. In short, the ex... ...nes of character and performance that exist ...ong teachers also exist among doctors and ...ice. But most of us, even if we grow up to be ...alids or criminals, will have spent more ...e with teachers than with either of their ...nterparts.

What also sets teachers apart is the milder ...sequences of their extremes. Doctors and ...s can kill somebody or save her life; teach... ...at their worst or best can usually do no ...re than to ruin or to improve it. Because the ...remes of benefit and detriment are less, the ...stique may be less also. But because those ...remes do exist and are so noticeable, the ...diocre quality of the mediocre teacher tends ...be noticeable as well. An average guy sel... ...lm looks more average than in front of a ...ssroom.

...n a society that touts both "excellence" and ...qua'ity," teachers are perhaps our best exam... ...y of the complex interplay of those two val...—both in the evaluative nature of their ...rk and in their own status as workers. We ...t them down in the cliches of populist ...toric and we put them up in the titanium ...ines of space shuttles, but the truth is, taken ...a whole, they're probably more representa... ...e of "ordinary Americans" than any single ...cupational group. If I were Arthur Miller, I ...uld not have made Willy Loman a salesman; ...ould have made him a teacher. In the lines ...which Willy calls the Chevrolet "the great... ...car ever built" and then, several pages later, ...s, "That goddamn Chevrolet, they ought to ...hibit the manufacture of that car!" I would have him talking about the American public school.

...et another way in which the conflicting ...rents of our democracy affect our resentment ...teachers has to do with how we conceive of ...vice, which is not much different from how ...leyman the Magnificent conceived of service. ...aristocratic societies, service is the butler ...o appears when the master pulls the velvet ...l rope. In a society like ours, service is the ...sk clerk who's supposed to come running ...ith a smile) whenever any tourist slaps the ...l. Our version may be the more "democrat... ...' but like the Greeks, whose democracies pre...led our own, we always seem to need a few ...ves in order to feel truly emancipated.

...It would be foolish to suggest that teachers ...a kind of slave. It would be equally foolish ...forget that not so long ago they were virtu... ...y a kind of indentured servant. That they

have advanced beyond servitude is not always regarded as a cause for celebration. Add teachers to that list of groups and persons who eventually "got so uppity" that they threatened to diminish the status that came of having them under our thumbs. Here again I must be care-

[illegible] my case. One of my favorite school stories has to do with a principal who told a friend of mine that although he understood his frustration when his son's teacher consistently failed to return his phone calls, he should understand that "returning calls [illegible] never been Mrs. Van Winkle's strength."

Still, even when one allows for the madd[ing] imperviousness—and equally madden[ing] impunity—of certain teachers, one is s[truck] struck from time to time by the popular [as]sumption that public schools, like Th[e] World bazaars and Atlantic City casin[os] ought to be places where the almighty spen[d] can throw his weight around like Almigh[ty] God. Whenever one hears that dearly belov[ed] phrase "local control," and one hears it in [a] corner of New England about once a day, [the] accent is usually on *control*; and the conti[nues] firmly on the teachers. Of course this is a[lso] true beyond the local level, most recently [in] proposals to fingerprint teachers in order [to] "protect children." What politician as keen [on] protecting his or her career as on protect[ing] children would ever propose fingerprint[ing] clergy, orthodontists, or live-in boyfrien[ds]? Not to forget every legislator employi[ng] a page.

For the most part, though, I do not h[ear] teachers criticized for having slipped th[eir] leashes so much as for having dropped th[eir] halos. "Teachers are not supposed to be in [it] for the money; they're supposed to be in it [for] the children"—a sentiment that sounds re[a]sonable enough until we remember that ev[en] the most altruistic teachers have been kno[wn] to produce children, and that teachers' ch[il]dren have been known to eat. Still, one c[an] almost hear the aggrieved tones of unrequit[ed] love in the voices of those who wistfully rec[all] the days "when a teacher was respected" a[nd] wouldn't have known what to do with ar[y] thing so crass as a dollar bill, not if you tap[ped] it to her nose.

Once again there's a contradiction lurki[ng] under the rhetoric, which reveals a cultu[ral] contradiction as well. Teachers are also reser[ved] ed *for* their altruism, and one does not have [to] look too far for examples of the resentment. [I] remember sitting next to a father at Tow[n] Meeting who in his litany of grievances agai[nst] teachers closed with this: "They teach kids n[ot] to work." It was a hardworking man who sa[id] this. What I think he meant was: "They tea[ch] kids that there are other things in life bes[ides] work, that is, besides work done for money." I recall another father, also hardworking b[ut] with the added perspective of being a teache[r] husband, who gave as his explanation for th[e] bitter controversy surrounding a guidan[ce] counselor at his school: "I think people rese[nt] her goodness."

It was a remark that struck home, in part b[e]cause home for me is a hardscrabble pla[ce]



I DO NOT BELIEVE that there is a country in the world where, in proportion to the population, there are so few ignorant, and at the same time so few learned, individuals. Primary instruction is within the reach of everybody; superior instruction is scarcely to be obtained by any. . . . Almost all the Americans are in easy circumstances, and can, therefore, obtain the first elements of human knowledge.

In America, there are but few wealthy persons; nearly all Americans have to take a profession. Now, every profession requires an apprenticeship. The Americans can devote to general education only the early years of life. At fifteen, they enter upon their calling, and thus their education generally ends at the age when ours begins. Whatever is done afterwards is with a view to some . . . object; a science is taken up as a matter of business, and the only branch of it which is attended to is such as admits of an immediate practical application. . . . A middling standard is fixed in America for human knowledge. All approach as near to it as they can; some as they rise, others as they descend. . . .

At the extreme borders of the Confederate States, upon the confines of society and the wilderness, a population of bold adventurers have taken up their abode, who pierce the solitudes of the American woods, and seek a country there, in order to escape the poverty which awaited them in their native home. As soon as the pioneer reaches the place which is to serve him for a retreat, he fells a few trees and builds a log-house. Nothing can offer a more miserable aspect than these isolated dwellings. The traveller who approaches one of them towards nightfall sees the flicker of the hearthflame through the chinks in the walls; and at night, if the wind rises, he hears the roof of boughs shake to and fro. . . . Who would not suppose that this poor hut is the asylum of rudeness and ignorance? Yet no sort of comparison can be drawn between the pioneer and the dwelling which shelters him. Everything about him is primitive and wild, but he is himself the result of the labor and experience of eighteen centuries. He wears the dress and speaks the language of cities; he is acquainted with the past, curious about the future, and ready for argument upon the present; he is, in short, a highly civilized being, who consents for a time to inhabit the backwoods, and who penetrates into the wilds of the New World with the Bible, an axe, and some newspapers. It is difficult to imagine the incredible rapidity with which thought circulates in the midst of these deserts. I do not think that so much intellectual activity exists in the most enlightened and populous districts of France.

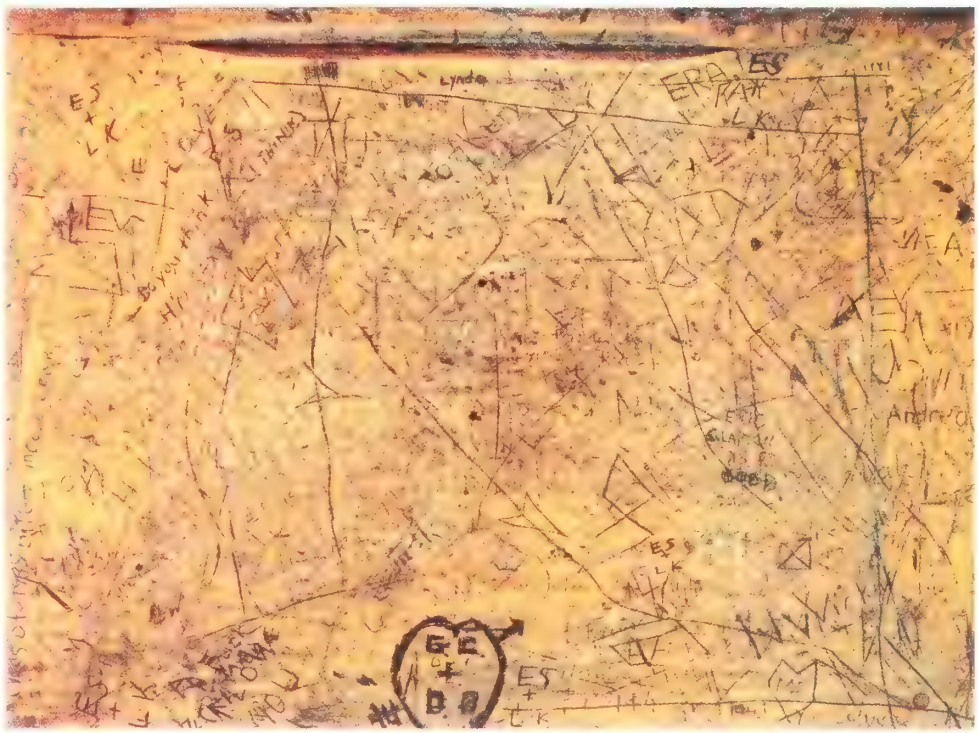
—ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE
Democracy in America
(1835–40)

...re many people have led very hard lives. In ... eyes, teachers make children unfit to live ... world where survival belongs to the tough. Special education, cooperative learning, ...nd chances—even art and music—are ... for some," but what have such things to ...ith real life as these people have known it? ...d if all this coddling is indeed valuable, does ... mean that a hard life is ...? I'm told there's a Sicil... proverb that says, "It's a ...ish man who educates ... children so they can de... ...him." It's a foolish man ... doesn't see that fear at ... root of nearly everything we might call reactionary.

People are said to hate ...nge, even though in our ...ety political change, at ...st, is supposed to come ...but by the will of the ...ple. I imagine that for ...ny of them hating teach... ...comes down to the same ...ng. Whenever our society ...anges, or wishes to ...nge, or pretends that it ...shes to change, schools ... teachers are enlisted in ... cause. If we decide that ...erspace is the place to go, ...start by sending the sec... ... grade. If we come to fear ... morality is going to hell in a handbasket, ...draw up a curriculum of "values-based" edu...tion. No teacher can hear the phrase ...launching a new initiative" without knowing ...t the launching pad is going to be located ...op of his desk.

... we oppose a given change, we may be in...ed to disdain the teacher who carries it for...d, though in many cases this amounts to ...ring bad news and killing the messenger. ...r chagrin can come not only from the ...nge itself but from the sense of having to ...sidize our own obsolescence. We shall never ...uire a sign outside a school building that ...is YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK, people feel ...m at work, no less than the workings of ...r own bowels, which is why, in times of un...ling social change and political insecurity, ...rens will sometimes descend with merciless ...gnation on a school budget. The first thing ...do, let's kill all the special programs. I have ...n heard people say, "It's the one thing left ... I have some control over."

...ut schools have not only been placed in the vanguard of [illegible] how in many ways been used to contain and minimize change. So if, for instance, we want to continue to practice de facto racial segregation, we can pretend otherwise by busing children between racially homogeneous schools. If we are content to see the gap between rich and poor grow wider every year, but wish to seem more "compassionate," we can try to establish some semblance of equity in the funding of public education. Ostensibly, our guiding principle here is that the first step in changing society for the better is changing schools.



That is a truly [illegible] guiding principle, provided that the *first* step doesn't wind up being the *only* step. Schools can indeed be better places than the communities that sustain them, but never much better, and never better for long. In the end, we can only change the world by changing the world. When something happens in a schoolyard to remind us of this, something awful and sad, we lash out at "the teachers" and "the schools." They were supposed to be making the world a better place, or at least [illegible] wanted them to.

Public schools embody [illegible] principles and contradictions better than any other institution we know. In schools we behold our own spitting image as a people who value equality but [illegible]



IT IS OMINOUS, A presumption of crime, that this word Education has so cold, so hopeless a sound. A treatise on education, a convention for education, a lecture on education affects us with slight paralysis and a certain yawning of the jaws. We are not encouraged when the law touches it with its fingers. Education should be as broad as man. . . . The imagination must be addressed. Why always coast on the surface and never open the interior of Nature, not by science, which is surface still, but by poetry? Is not the Vast an element of the mind? Yet what teaching, what book of this day appeals to the Vast? . . .

Alas for the cripple Practice when it seeks to come up with the bird Theory, which flies before it. Try your design on the best school. The scholars are of all ages and temperaments and capacities. It is difficult to class them, some are too young, some are slow, some perverse. Each requires so much consideration, that the morning hope of the teacher, of a day of love and progress, is often closed at evening by despair. Each single case, the more it is considered, shows more to be done; and the strict conditions of the hours, on one side, and the number of tasks, on the other. Whatever becomes of our method, the conditions stand fast,—six hours, and thirty, fifty, or a hundred and fifty pupils. Something must be done, and done speedily, and in this distress the wisest are tempted to adopt violent means, to proclaim martial law, corporal punishment, mechanical arrangement, bribes, spies, wrath, main strength and ignorance, in lieu of that wise genial providential influence they had hoped, and yet hope at some future day to adopt. Of course the devotion [illegible] enjoins unanimously on the teacher. He cannot indulge his genius, he cannot delight [illegible] with young friends, when his eye is always on the clock, and twenty classes are to be dealt with before the day is done. Besides, how can he please himself with genius, and foster modest virtue? A sure proportion of rogue and dunce finds its way into every school and requires a cruel share of time, and the gentle teacher, who wished to be a Providence to youth, is grown a martinet, sore with suspicions; knows as much vice as the judge of a police court, and his love of learning is lost in the routine of grammars and books of elements. . . .

I confess myself utterly at a loss in suggesting particular reforms in our ways of teaching. No discretion that can be lodged with a school-committee, with the overseers or visitors of an academy, of a college, can at all avail to reach these difficulties and perplexities, but they solve themselves when we leave institutions and address individuals. . . . I advise teachers to cherish mother-wit. I assume that you will keep the grammar, reading, writing and arithmetic in order; 't is easy and of course you will. But smuggle in a little contraband wit, fancy, imagination, thought. . . . Nobody shall be disorderly, or leave his desk without permission, but if a boy runs from his bench, or a girl, because the fire falls, or to check some injury that a little dastard is inflicting behind his desk on some helpless sufferer, take away the medal from the head of the class and give it on the instant to the brave rescuer. If a child happens to show that he knows any fact about astronomy, or plants, or birds, or rocks, or history, that interests him and you, hush all the classes and encourage him to tell it so that all may hear. Then you have made your school-room like the world.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON
"Education"
(1864)

moment but bet on the future, who espouse truism but esteem self-reliance, who sincer believe in chance but just as sincerely do that chance will do them any good. Whet we call these contradictions schizophreni creative tension, beauty or ugliness, will pend on the eye of the beholder. Public-sch teachers themselves are no less an embo ment of the same contradictions, just as in broadest sense all teachers embody the s jects that they teach. At least the more mer table ones do. Think of it sometime. Jean Silverstein didn't teach you math; he t math, fleshed out in its angular glory. Al this is to say that the best teaching is incar tional. Teaching is the *word*—the music, formula, and even the Constitution of United States—made flesh and dwell among us.

The forty-odd years that I have spent school are not unlike the forty-eight yea have spent in my body, a mix of pain and p sure in which the pain has perhaps been m intense but the pleasure more constant, m influential, and, in some way I can't entir explain, more true. At some level it was n fitting that my mother sent me off to sch that morning, and every morning, by hand me my lunch, as if to say that the part of that learns is one with the part that eats, e if on certain mornings it was also one with part that pukes. In contrast, the daydream the boy I was at six, playing among the tor stones when he ought to have been at sch amounts to a wish for disembodiment. It is vision of a gnostic heaven, in which the em cipated spirits of the elect rise from the com cations of the flesh, not in a new body but no body at all.

The same can be said for many of the pr ent initiatives to diminish radically the sc of public education in America, if not to ab ish it altogether. The utopian school, the ber-school, the voucher-subsidized school, school of "school choice," all reduce to a f tasy of social and political transcendence—attempt to sidestep the contradictions democracy, the cruel jokes of genetics, crueler jokes of class, and the darker side of versity. If we can but find the right gnosis, see, the secret path to educational enlight ment, we shall at last be able to shed the ble ished, prickly skin of the body politic and l as unencumbered spirits with harps and c nets or whichever golden instrument best companies the appropriate lifestyle choice may sound like a return to Eden, like miraculous reversal of some irreversible f but make no mistake; it is the equivalent o wish for death.

ENGLISH 99

Literacy among the ruins

By Frank Gannon

Recently, a small college asked me to teach. I was told that I'd be teaching writing. This sounded pretty good to me. It might be interesting, and I might find some kid who was very talented. Then I would bring him along, nurture the talent, and, at the end of the movie, when he was winning the Nobel Prize for Literature, he would say, "I want to thank Frank Gannon, who first taught me how to write." Then they'd show me, a really old guy in a hospital bed watching him accept the Nobel Prize on television. He'd say some little dumb thing that the kid used to say when he was first learning how to be great from me. Something from the time when he was rebellious and I was crusty-but-lovable . . . Then they would play "triumphant" music.

I bought a herringbone jacket. I couldn't find one with those leather elbow patches. I tried at Men's Wearhouse. The sales guy told me they didn't make them anymore, but the guy looked like the sergeant in *Gomer Pyle* and probably didn't travel in academic circles, so I doubt that he knew.

But the coat was very tweedy. I put it on and looked at myself in the mirror. I used Robin Williams in *Good Will Hunting* as my goal and I was very close.

I thought I would be teaching some kind of nonfiction creative-writing thing at the college. I was told that not enough students were interested. The little college was hard up for money, and small classes, such as my proposed "English 393: Nonfiction Writing," were not very profitable.

Instead, I wound up teaching a class called English 99, a profitable course. English 99 wasn't like most of the other courses at the college. It didn't "count" as a course for the bachelor's degree. It was held in a college classroom, but taking it didn't give you any credits toward a degree. English 99 was a pass/fail course for students who, according to the college, were going to be "overly challenged" by the introductory English course, English 101. English 101 at the college was not the intellectual equivalent of boot camp, but many of the students at the college weren't ready for that kind of hurdle. The class met for one hour three times a week. After a student passed English 99, he or she would be theoretically prepared to take the first college English course.

The administration at the college didn't like to draw attention to English 99 because the course didn't "work." Most of those who took English 99 never seemed to get anywhere close to graduating, and a lot of them, discouraged by the rigor of English 99, wouldn't ever take another college course for the rest of their lives.

The truth of the matter was that English 99 was there so that the college could get some money from these kids before they flunked out or quit. The college was shockingly expensive. Its main appeal was that it almost never rejected anyone who applied.

This whole thing was pretty cloudy from a moral perspective, but that wasn't a big factor for me, a person of cloudy morality. Compared with, say, the Sopranos, I was still semi-moral, sort of. At least I told myself that.

For me the troublesome moral implications were settled by two deciding factors: A) I could always say, in the immortal words of Joseph Goebbels: "Hey, I just work here."

B) Dental.

I liked the life of a professor. I spent my days reading the books I

Frank Gannon is the author of [illegible] *and a contributing editor. He is currently working on* [illegible] *Warner Books. His article "Rat Patrol: A Story" appeared in the September* [illegible] *issue of* [illegible]



TRAINING FOR BLACK MEN

But what training for the profitable living together of black men and white? A hundred and fifty years ago our task would have seemed easier. Then Dr. Johnson blandly assured us that education was needful solely for the embellishments of life, and was useless for ordinary vermin. To-day we have climbed to heights where we would open at least the outer courts of knowledge to all, display its treasures to many, and select the few to whom its mystery of Truth is revealed, not wholly by birth or the accidents of the stock market, but at least in part according to deftness and aim, talent and character. . . .

The tendency is here, born of slavery and quickened to renewed life by the crazy imperialism of the day, to regard human beings as among the material resources of a land to be trained with an eye single to future dividends. Race-prejudices, which keep brown and black men in their "places," we are coming to regard as useful allies with such a theory, no matter how much they may dull the ambition and sicken the hearts of struggling human beings. And above all, we daily hear that an education that encourages aspiration, that sets the loftiest of ideals and seeks as an end culture and character rather than bread-winning, is the privilege of white men and the danger and delusion of black. . . .

[N]o secure civilization can be built in the South with the Negro as an ignorant, turbulent proletariat. Suppose we seek to remedy this by making them laborers and nothing more: they are not fools, they have tasted of the Tree of Life. . . . [C]an any sane man imagine that they will lightly lay aside their yearning and contentedly become hewers of wood and drawers of water? . . .

Above our modern socialism, and out of the worship of the mass, must persist and evolve that higher individualism which the centres of culture protect; there must come a loftier respect for the sovereign human soul that seeks to know itself and the world about it; that seeks a freedom for expansion and self-development; that will love and hate and labor in its own way, untrammeled alike by old and new. Such souls aforetime have inspired and guided worlds, and if we be not wholly bewitched by our Rhinegold, they shall again. Herein the longing of black men must have respect: the rich and bitter depth of their experience, the unknown treasures of their inner life, the strange rendings of nature they have seen, may give the world new points of view and make their loving, living, and doing precious to all human hearts. And to themselves in these the days that try their souls, the chance to soar in the dim blue air above the smoke is to their finer spirits boon and guerdon for what they lose on earth by being black.

I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not. Across the color line I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls. From out the caves of evening that swing between the strong-limbed earth and the tracery of the stars, I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they come all graciously with no scorn nor condescension. So, wed with Truth, I dwell above the Veil. Is this the life you grudge us, O knightly America? Is this the life you long to change into the dull red hideousness of Georgia? Are you so afraid lest peering from this high Pisgah, between Philistine and Amalekite, we sight the Promised Land?

—W.E.B. DU BOIS
"The Training of Black Men"
The Souls of Black Folk
(1903)

to when I was a student, and it was pleas putting on my professor costume and walk around on the campus.

A student would see me and say, "Dr. G non." I would wave in a low-key, acade way. I wasn't really a "doctor" or anythin was just a magazine writer. But the stude didn't know that. They assumed that I, like the other professors, had a Ph.D.

I was a pseudo-professor. "Dr. Ganno That sounded strange but good. I'd alwa wave. I thought of getting a pipe.

Of course, I was an impostor. But so was t class I taught. I was posing as a professor a English 99 was posing as a college course.

There were three definite types of stude in the class: Bored-looking girls, jocks, a this year, a new category: Bosnian refugees. wealthy alumnus of the college had establish a grant for the victims of the war in Bosn The young Bosnians at the college were th because of the grant. It enabled them to en in the college, take courses, and, hopeful start a new life in America.

Many of these Bosnian young people h been college students in their native coun before the war had shattered their lives. N that they were in America it was no longer i portant that they were Serbs or Croats Christians or Muslims. They were now Bosni people beginning over in America.

A lot of the Bosnian kids were extrem bright. Some of them had been pre-med a pre-law students before the tragic war, but b cause most of these kids were just learning E glish, they were natural candidates for Engli 99.

So the situation was set. Two huge vehicl the "Horror-of-the-World Truck" and t "Stupidity-of-the-World Truck," were about run into each other. I was there to watch. this had involved insurance, the police and t insurance company would have interrogat me. As it was, I just watched.

(I have disguised the identities of both t college and the students for reasons that will think, become obvious to the reader.)

There was no "seating chart" in English 9 so anyone could sit anywhere in the room, b for some reason, the classes always segregat themselves. The groups all sat together, whic I thought, underlined their status as specif groups. The English 99 classroom was large, a there was enough room to establish a sort butter zone of empty desks around each group.

Again, the three groups were:

1. The Bored-Looking Girls
2. The Jocks
3. The Refugees

After the first day of class, no one ev

nged desks, so the sense of three distinct ups was emphasized. This was, of course, a ting-exercise class, so the content of the ing was not as important as the form. The a was to get the students good enough at writing English that they could have a chance in English 101.

The first day, I tried to explain writing English to the class. I told them that writing was re like playing golf or the piano than it was other courses. Writing wasn't really a subt to be studied. That is, writing English se was more a skill than a body of acquired owledge, like, say, history, or psychology, or logy. It was an activity more than something that can be studied. You don't *learn* it, learn how to *do* it.

used a lot of metaphors to get across this idea. It was like juggling. Like riding a bicycle p doing it and one day you wake up and you do it. If you don't quit, you will get it. It is like . It is like tennis. It is like the hula hoop. It is jumping rope. Like riding a bicycle.

t was very difficult to come up with something they had all done. The three groups—the ed-looking girls, the jocks, and the refugees—re like three separate countries. They were all ing to get to the same general place. But they re starting from places a million miles apart.

The writing of the three groups was very, very tinct, very particular. The writing of the ed-looking girls could never be mistaken the writing of the jocks or the writing of refugees. Except for the fact that they re written in English, the writings of the ee groups were DRASTICALLY different.

Because we were just concerned with ting in general, I found it best to let the dents write about anything they want- Despite that fact, however, the students wrote in-class essay after in-class es- on the same subjects.

The bored-looking girls always wrote out three topics. Topic one can be called "LIFE IS HARD":

It is very hard to have a relationship with a guy because it is hard to meet a guy that you like. When you meet them they never turn out to be the way you want them to be. Like this guy I went out with last summer. I thought he was sweet but I found out that he lied all the time. Right to my face. Incredible.

Topic two was "I CAN'T DO ANYTHING":

I always say I'm going to do something and then I never do it. Like this morning. I said that I was going to math class but I went to the Jiffy Mart and I bought a slushy and I drank it in the car with my girlfriend Mandy and it was hard to go to math class because it's so boring. I didn't go so I didn't get to make up the test. Now I have to find. I hate that. I have to apply myself.

Topic three was "I AM HERE":

I don't mean to come off as a complete [illegible] at the alarm clock. I'm [illegible]. I am so late. I just throw some clothes on. I don't even put on much makeup. A little bit of eye liner. I'm gorgeous anyway and I just wear that to keep. I have to stop doing this. It is [illegible] young person's disease. [illegible] is expected to go to college.

The jocks also had three subjects. One was "I HAVE FUN":

Last week my friend [illegible] went to the beach and got a room. In the daytime we just hung out at the pool and at night we would go out and get some beer and go to places. We got there around nine and it was pretty empty. Later on there were a lot of girls and we all met girls. It was just kick back and have some fun. And we had a good time. In the morning we got a bite to eat and then just hung out by the pool and caught some rays and drank a couple of beers. One [illegible] we went to the mall to have new tires. I bought some shoes. It was great. But then we had to go back to college again.

The jocks' topic two was "I NEED FREEDOM":

Why is it that the [illegible] can't [illegible]? That is so stupid because a person knows what he is doing and why should he have to wait until some-

Every government degenerates when trusted to the rulers of the people alone. The people themselves therefore are its only safe depositories. And to render even them safe, their minds must be improved to a certain degree.

— THOMAS JEFFERSON (1781)

body says it's all right. We [illegible] to drink more. But [illegible] you're old enough to [illegible] you're old enough to get killed for the same country you can't drink in. It doesn't [illegible] to me. [illegible] stupid. In Europe they start [illegible]. Why can't we be like that in America? [illegible] I don't know. I don't [illegible]. I [illegible] when we [illegible] have a designated driver.

Three was "WHAT I CAN DO GOOD":

I started playing baseball when I was [illegible] T-ball. When I was twelve our team had won the region. I was the pitcher and [illegible] always had a good arm. When I was in high school we were second in the state. I [illegible] pitcher except [illegible]

won our division and it was awesome. I was like about the best player on that team. When I got to college I was nervous because I didn't have confidence about playing on this level but my dad said just relax and do the best you can and the first day I hit the ball real good so now I feel better about everything and I'm really looking forward to this year.

The refugees had only one theme, "LIFE."

When I was ten the war came in and people lost lives. We only have water on some days. People saw shooting and war came closer. I was in a building and a bomb went off and my friend was killed. I had to leave country without family. It changes everything. But war kept getting closer until we must leave. I walked by people dead in street. Cetnik and anti-Serb leave because nothing is left.

In Sarajevo soldiers say that they will bring a dream of making things fair. People I live with call Melmed in Bijeljina. Relatives all killed. U.N. has blue helmets take care of small problems. Milosevic and Karadzic do not do what they said. Can't help. Now I live in America and go to college here. I am trying to learn English. Difficult. First night was in Brooklyn. Very scary at night.

Beyond the power of diffusing old wealth, [education] has the prerogative of creating new. It is a thousand times more lucrative than fraud; and adds a thousand fold more to a nation's resources than the most successful conquests.

— **HORACE MANN** (1849)

Sometimes the refugees write things that, if written by one of the other groups, would get me to write "nice detail" in the margin. Many times the only thing I could ever think of to write was "good." Sometimes I would look at the word after I wrote it and cross it out because it seemed like a stupid thing to write. So I would just circle run-ons and incorrect sentences.

Adnan lived next door has hand blown in war.

I corrected it.

Adnan, who lived next door, had his hand Blown off in the war.

Then I crossed out my corrected sentence. Sometimes after reading a few refugee papers I felt that instead of teaching English I was unlearning English.

Our class was at eight-thirty in the morning. Sometimes I would get there a few minutes late. There would be students waiting outside t room. I unlocked the door to let the students Then I said, "I need coffee." I'd excuse mysi and go downstairs to get coffee. When I got bac I saw a student paper on my desk:

Some people so hungry they eat tree. They t tree in boil water to make soft tree. Since beg rationing green corn is best thing. But army a air force have nice meals. Here everything good

Some of the Refugee Group's papers we narrative in nature.

My sister had friend. She said that soldiers to her off the street and hurt and then let her go. Th she cries never would come out of room. People s forget. That is hard for her. She stay in room.

I remember circling the verb ar writing, "agreement?"

At the end of every semester I would have give grades to the students. The only two grad were "Pass" and "Fail." I passed and failed a lot bored-looking girls and a lot of jocks. Mostly th passed. You could take English 99 more tha once, and a lot of students took it two and eve three times. I never failed a refugee. I knew th

English 101 would be hard for many of the but I thought that I might be teaching E glish 99 again, and I still wouldn't be able "correct" anything.

After a few weeks of English 99, I de perately wanted it to end. It had a bad e fect on me. I started to dread Monday Wednesdays, and Fridays. The dean's se retary called me one day. It was right aft class, and I was thinking about an essay had just read. The essay was about Saraj vo, about hiding.

I had just finished reading an essa about how guys can be so thoughtless tha it's not even funny. Before that I had read a essay about people who wear designer cloth and how they are so snotty. Before that I rea what happens when a bomb goes off in th middle of the night in your apartment buildin

The dean wanted to see me. I was very hap py to go.

The dean, a polite balding man in his late fo ties, told me, in a pleasant voice, that the colleg was trying to "get leaner." He was sorry, and th had nothing to do with my work, but he was go ing to have to cut me loose. I said that I appre ciated everything the college had done for me. H said that I was "on the top of our list" if the ever hired more professors. We shook hands.

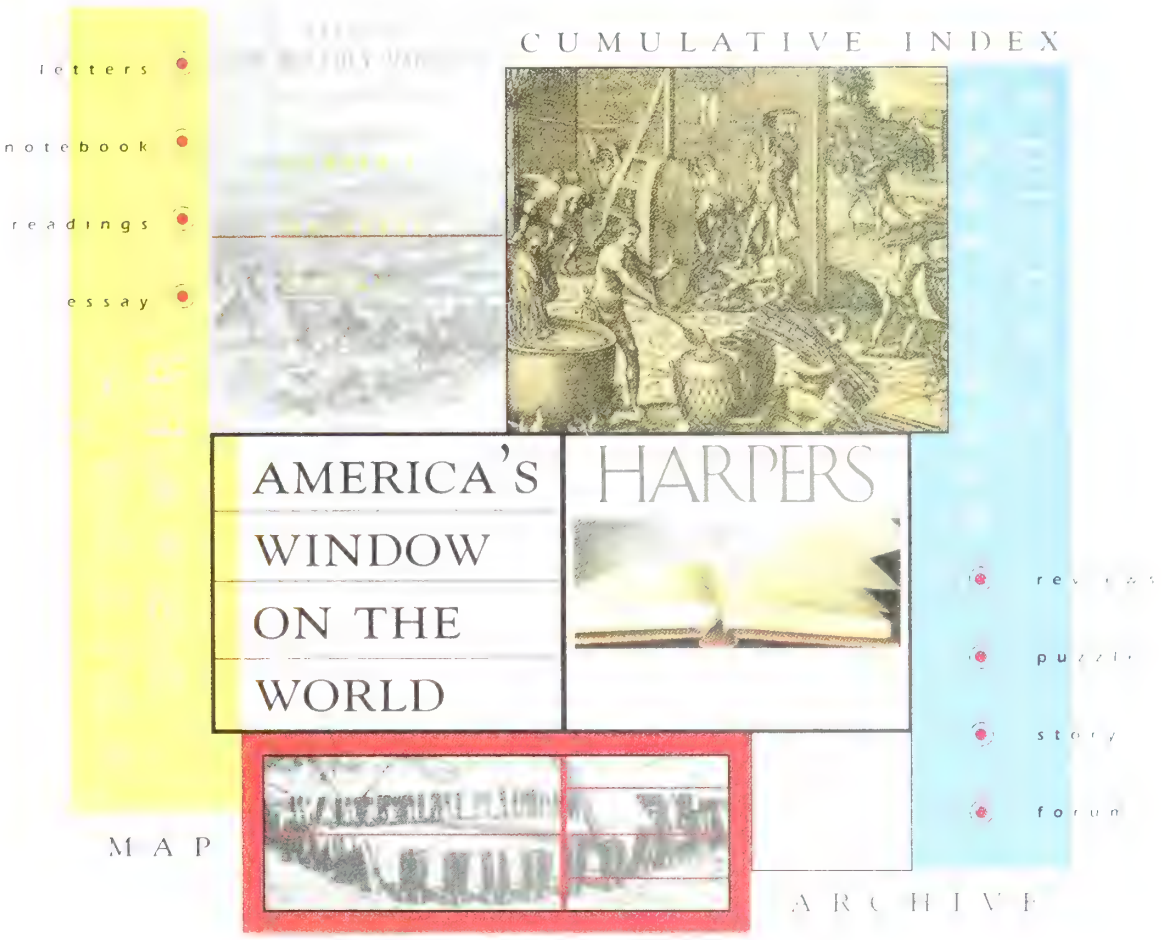
I was going to walk back up to my office. remembered what I was doing when I left. still had a lot more essays to read, but I wen outside and walked home trying not to think i sentences.

SCHOOL ON A HILL

On the design and redesign of American education

Once upon a time, America's would-be architects of utopia aspired to build cities that shone like beacons from hills. Today, they reform education. "Try your design on the best school," Emerson dared readers more than a century ago, and since 1991, when Minnesota enacted the country's first charter-school law, thousands of educators, parents, activists, and corporations have done just that. More than 2,000 publicly supported, independently operated, nonsectarian schools have been chartered nationwide, each with its own special mission. There are charter schools for future entrepreneurs, others for incipient ecologists; charter schools devoted to patriotism, others to multiculturalism; those founded on a theory of "natural learning" and others on a "knowledge-based" curriculum; those motivated by profit, those by charity. Some perform no better than the highly regulated schools they were invented to replace, but others may represent the most promising alternative yet found to what Emerson called our educational "system of despair." Inspired by the example of these best charter schools, *Harper's Magazine* recently asked four of our nation's leading educators to accept Emerson's dare and try their designs on a school.

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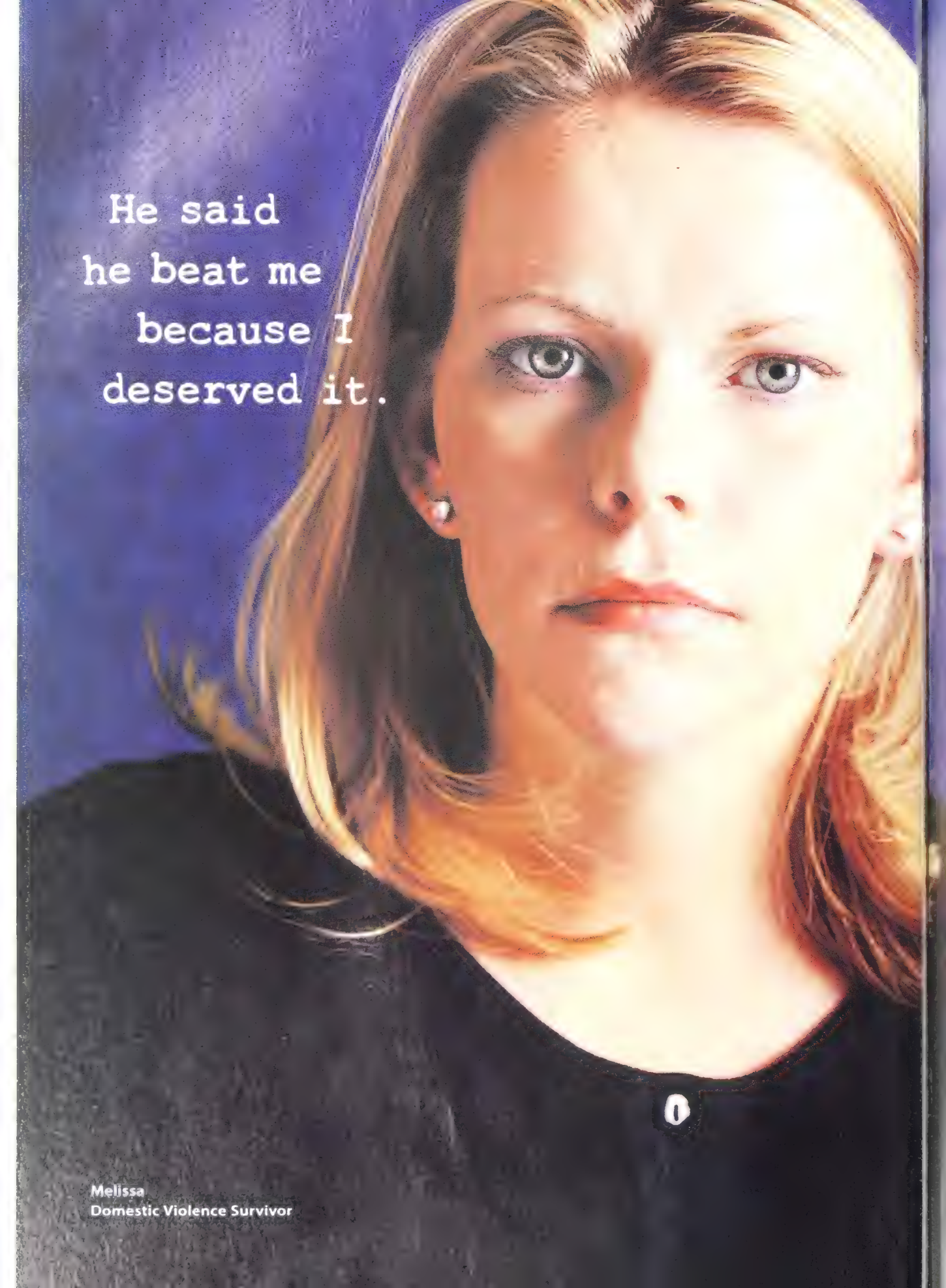


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He said
he beat me
because I
deserved it.
Melissa
Domestic Violence Survivor



HELPING END DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

"He tried to strangle me last night."

Melissa cried as she wrote these words, eight months pregnant and seeking an order of protection from her husband. Their high school romance had seemed like a fairy tale, but when the honeymoon ended, the beatings began. Terrified, she hid her abuse from family and friends. Once she was finally free from her abusive husband, Melissa began to share her story with other young women, so they would know that no one should live with domestic violence.

Now I know I deserve better.

Too often, society blames victims of domestic violence for not leaving, rather than holding the abusers responsible. The reality is that financial dependency, concern for the children and the fear of being pursued or even killed can make the idea of escape seem impossible. No one deserves to be abused. And everyone should have someone to turn to. With your support, domestic violence programs across America can offer hope and new beginnings.

Just ask Melissa.

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AN AMERICAN ALBUM

HARPER'S MAGAZINE

1850 - 2000

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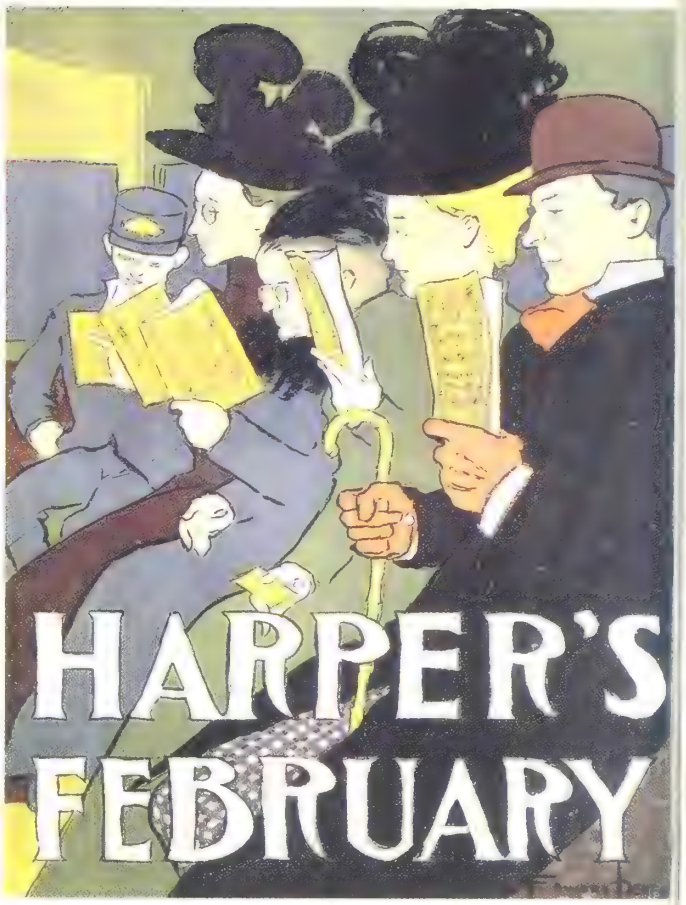
This year marks the sesquicentennial of *Harper's Magazine*–the nation's oldest monthly magazine–and in honor of the occasion, the editors have published a magnificent 712-page, richly illustrated volume of the best writing from the magazine's pages. For 15 decades of uninterrupted publication, *Harper's* has explored the American experience with a fiercely independent spirit and spectacular writing. Now that experience is available in *An American Album: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Harper's Magazine*.

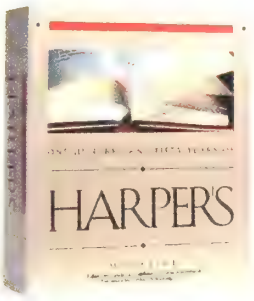
The Table of Contents is stunning in its range: Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, Willa Cather, Eudora Welty, John Cheever, Philip Roth, John Updike, Norman Mailer, David Mamet, Annie Dillard, and Tom Wolfe–and scores of other writers and artists who have made an indelible impression on America's literary history.

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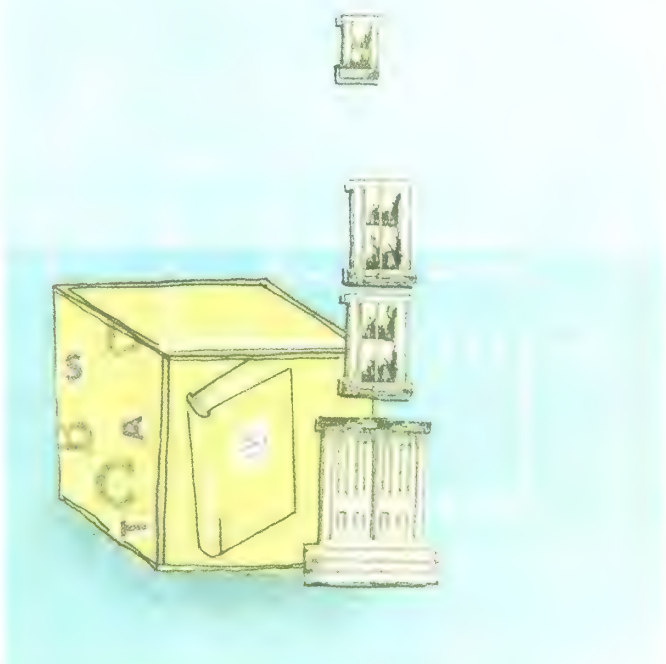
sist education, because they have this notion that it's just not for them. Somehow we have to help them overcome that—and gain the understanding that learning is something we *all* do, that we all start by knowing very little about new subjects and that learning is lifelong.

JOHN TAYLOR GATTO: Three years ago, in a summer issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Mortimer Zuckerman laid out the proposition that no one in the world, for a hundred years, would be able to catch the American economy—not because we had any particular technological advantage but because we had an enormous human advantage. And then he began to detail the characteristics of the American worker. He said, and I'm extrapolating here, that American workers define themselves by what they buy, and so they will continue to maintain the only reliable domestic market in the world. He said that American workers, including management, including district superintendents, live in a state of low-grade fear of being fired and replaced. Reading this, I thought, "How could we have gotten this way, that we're such wonderful fits for the economic machine?" Slowly it began to dawn on me that the schools I'd worked in for thirty years were the factories that produced this perfect fit. We have been *schooled* to have no inner life at all.

LAPHAM: So we take the caterpillar, and before it can turn into a butterfly we make sure it turns into a silkworm. And that's why it's important to reinvent the school? For the purpose of human freedom?

GATTO: If we *want* human freedom. If some of the more intense feelings of the first generations of Americans are ever once again to get their play. Most college graduates would be, I submit to you, unable to read Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* today, because of the dense allusions to science and politics and history and philosophy. Cooper's books were absolute blockbusters. And who were Cooper's readers but dirt farmers? I believe it was Chevalier who said that the American dirt farmer goes into the field with the plow under one arm and Descartes under the other. After the Civil War, the lesson was learned that rather than fill one order for a hat, you could stamp 3 million identical hats and get rich. Since then, school has failed in a *human* sense, but in a *systematic* sense it's been very successful. It leaves such barrenness in its path that people don't know what to do with their lives other than punch a button and watch television.

THEODORE SIZER: You are assuming that Americans make educational policy rationally. But I think history will show that the system follows a kind of *mindless* thread. In the sixties, Charles Silverman wandered around and visited all these schools and listened to all these state superintendents, and concluded that the whole thing was mindless, that we do what we do because we've always done it. The basic architecture and the ideas behind the high school haven't changed in a fundamental way since Charles Eliot and the Committee of Ten designed it in the 1890's. We know more about human learning. We understand that the culture and the economy have changed. But we are so stuck in what has become the conventional way of schooling that we don't think twice about it. So we still say that the mainline subjects that Charles Eliot and his colleagues established in 1893 are the core of the school. We still assume that one can test children's mastery of those mainline subjects in a way that is rigorous and useful. We persist in thinking that school is school is school. It runs for 180 days. You take English, math, social studies, science, in forty-seven-minute periods, taught by teachers who have more than a hundred students, sometimes two hundred. The students march forward on the basis of their birth days, in things called "grades"—like eggs—and we tell ourselves that we can ascertain whether those kids have profound intellectual competence. The system is mindless. The only villain is a society unprepared to think hard about what it means to learn.



I disagree that there [illegible] here. When the president of Harvard, James Bryant Conant, [illegible] called *The Child, the Parent, and the State*, that the schools we have are the result of a coup, I

that if you want to know what the coup is about—and you'd be mad to try to overthrow this now—get yourself a copy of Alexander Inglis's book, *Principles of Secondary Education*. Inglis lays out the principles they were working toward in 1918. These were people seeking to separate themselves from the mass of the human [illegible] Darwin and his cousin, Francis Galton, warned that cross-breeding with the city bottom-feeders and that's about 95 percent of the population—would cause evolution to march backward. So the proprietors of the society founded private boarding schools and about eleven other layers of privilege designed to protect the breeding stock. They set the rest of the people against one another to compete for what jobs and professional licenses the proprietors of society allowed them.

The street, with its ash barrels and its dirt, the river that runs foul with mud, are their domain. What training they receive is picked up there. And they are apt pupils. If the mud and the dirt are easily reflected in their lives, what wonder?

—JACOB A. RIIS (1890)

LAPHAM: So we've got a hundred-year-old system set up to turn out sheep.

[illegible] In the name of efficiency, and in order to make management most efficient, the workplace [illegible] and [illegible], because [illegible] people are not independent.

[illegible] I think that's the way it used to be, John, but the new economy is demanding a level of intelligence and skills that the old economy did not. The economy has always influenced the output of the educational system, and the educational system has always given the economy only what it could consume. If you look at the economy up [illegible] the economy needed most from the school system was unskilled workers [illegible] there is a dearth of *skilled* talent coming out of the school system. And the reality for most students [illegible] the modern economy requires more of people. I think it [illegible] American economy don't require anything. [illegible] restaurants. Half of the restaurant business is those [illegible] corporations control the beef industry, and they make important incursions into the government to get the regulatory environment they want. You change the schools and you're going to destroy the fast-food business. You're going to destroy the television industry. You provide independent people capable of independent thought and you virtually destroy this entire economy.

[illegible] I think the difference is that forty or fifty years ago, unskilled workers could get manufacturing jobs that provided a real income and a comfortable life. These McDonald's jobs, these Gap jobs, are great for teenagers, but they do not support a family.

SIZER: In a culture in which commerce controls most of the transmission of information, and at a very low cost, you would think that, because we are a proud democracy, we would place a high value on people who knew how to ask the question "Why?" But increasingly some distant authority decides what it is that kids should know and what questions they should be able to answer. There is less and less interest in preparing people who have the intelligence and the habit of mind to ask the unfamiliar and perhaps painful questions. Because our long-term economy depends on the informed skeptic, that person who says, "That's interesting—it seems to work, but gee, if we looked at it in a different way, it might work better" is crucial. So it's the increasingly standardized values that trouble me the most. Feisty people are the people who have made this country special.

11. MISSION STATEMENT

LAPHAM: Is that the purpose of this school we're attempting to design? To produce feisty individuals?

[illegible] Right.

LAPHAM: Not to produce a skilled labor force, or docile voters, or simply people who can read a menu and fill out a tax form?

[illegible]O: Citizens. There are three major purposes that human history has assigned to schooling, in every part of the world. One is to make good people—the religious or ethical motive, call it. Another is to make good citizens—that's a later development. The third is to make people their personal best. Then there is a fourth purpose, which comes in around the turn of the century: to turn people into resources for the disposition of government and the corporations.

JORDAN: Charter schools are often mission-driven schools; most of the students know why they are there. In our school, the mission is to prepare them for college, civic involvement, and life.

LAPHAM: And while we are educating these feisty cit-

rons who have inner lives, we also need to make education *relevant*, right?

SIZER: It should be relevant to the child and relevant to the culture.

[illegible] But to the *local* culture, not some fictitious national or global culture. To the parents. To the local community. Otherwise your modeling in this vast abstract world that is genuinely meaningless.

SIZER: Kids get their sense of life and images and language and so forth outside of school, away from the kitchen table. I was a high school principal in the seventies and then again in the late nineties. A fourteen-year-old today carries into school a much more sophisticated idea of the world than he or she carried into school during the 1970s. We Americans, in and out of schools, *are* reaching kids. There is a web of influences beyond the school. Not just the family. The street, the media.

We can't design the perfect charter school. My experience with people starting new schools is that unless they can somehow connect in a constructive way with this larger group of influences—mostly families, yes, but other influences as well—the results will follow social-class lines. You got rich kids in your school? They score well and all go to college. You got poor kids in the school? They don't score well and they don't go to college. But if you get this larger network going—think about education as "schooling-plus"—then you've got some leverage.

LAPHAM: But how do you get "schooling-plus" to the poor kid?

SIZER: The school invests in bringing that family unit along, from the time the kid is small. And invests time in making sure that non-English-speaking Mom understands what is going on in teaching her child English—in making the family members benign co-conspirators. If you reach out and connect kids to the community at large, and in the process help the community see its collective responsibility—store owners, police officers, people on the street—the results are stunning.

JORDAN: Is the problem that we're trying to invent a *system* with a uniform purpose, and that this attempt at standardization is defeating the very impulse that Ted is trying to inspire? Because if you don't allow each school to define its own purpose, then you are allowing someone in some bureaucracy or some standard from the 1890s to define what schools are. When you have a school system, you have administrations trying to lead and also trying to kowtow to whatever interests are paying their salaries. *Nobody* wants the awful job of being a principal, and so you have this terrible self-fulfilling prophecy: you don't trust principals, and so you create more rules and regulations—you have to do this and this and this, and you must have these professional-development programs, and you must have the [illegible] The people who tolerate that are not the feisty thinkers.

SIZER: You could build a system that would look quite different from the system we've got. Let's say state boards and districts or county school committees don't run schools. They issue contracts. And a group of parents and teachers get together and look at the broad outline of what the county or state board requires; the group then makes a proposal about the way it intends to run its school. If the state board says yes, it comes back in five years



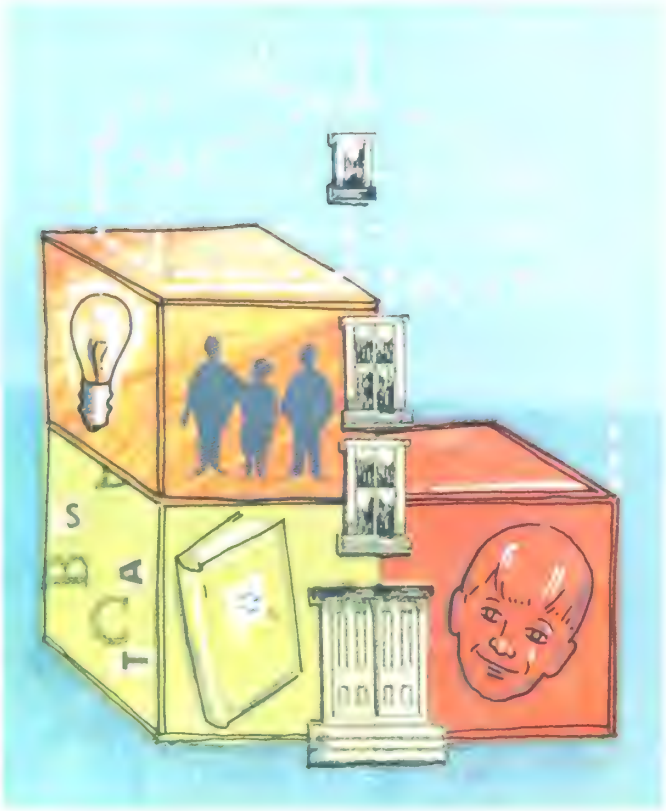
WE WANT ONE CLASS OF persons to have a liberal education, and we want another class of persons, a very much larger class, of necessity, in every society, to forgo the privileges of a liberal education and fit themselves to perform specific difficult manual tasks. You cannot train them for both in the time that you have at your disposal. They must make a selection, and you must make a selection. I do not mean to say that in the manual training there must not be an element of liberal training, neither am I hostile to the idea that in the liberal education there should be an element of the manual training. But what I am intent upon is that we should not confuse ourselves with regard to what we are trying to make of the pupils under our instruction. We are either trying to make liberally-educated persons out of them, or we are trying to make skillful servants of society along mechanical lines, or else we do not know what we are trying to do. . . .

[W]hat is technical education? It is one which condemns all but the extraordinary individual to a minor part in life, to a part not of command or direction but of specific performance, to the difficult manual tasks of the world which require skill, a perfect command of the muscles, a trained eye, a definite knowledge of physical relations and of complex machinery; its pupils are men schooled precisely in the particular processes which they are to apply. One of the drawbacks to American industry is that we do not make such men because we overshoot the mark and try to make them something else besides. The consequence is that neither side of the task is completed or perfected, and we make neither liberally-educated men nor serviceable experts. It is not that we should not wish to do it, it is that no matter how hard we wish we cannot do it. It is absolutely an unpatriotic thing to waste the money devoted to education by trying to do a thing which [illegible] majority of men have to be [illegible]

[illegible]

to inspect and verify whether the school has accomplished what it set out to accomplish. If not, the state can cut off the funding. The state board doesn't run anything. The decisions about the shape and the operation of the school are made by the teachers and the parents, in response to some basic guidelines from the state, and in response to the state's right, periodically and rigorously, to inspect. All of this reflects the idea of charters.

JORDAN: I think it was Diane Ravitch who said, "We don't need a school system but rather—"



LAPHAM: You could break the schools down into niche schools under such a system. Suppose your objective is the feisty individual, and suppose my objective is the happy worker.

GATTO: As long as attendance wasn't compulsory, it wouldn't matter.

LAPHAM: But doesn't citizenship go out the window if any school can teach whatever it wants?

SIZER: There are some essentials that all schools could be required to teach.

LAPHAM: Give me a list of the essentials.

SIZER: Two languages, at the minimum. And a sense

And on top of that—and this is much harder to

GATTO: Yes! It's the first thing I would put on the list! What if you said at the beginning of the year,

proven to me that you are honest, honorable, decent, courageous, independent, curious, and generous. That will do for the seventh grade."

JORDAN: I would add adept use of the English language. Words are *power* in this culture.

SIZER: Words and *images*.

STEWART: And our young people need to be equipped with a bullshit-o-meter. They need to be able to distinguish between adults who mean them good and adults who mean them harm.

GATTO: Exactly. If you go through the twenty volumes of Thomas Jefferson's writings, you can distill five principles that Jefferson said were justifications for schooling. The first two were to teach people their rights and to teach them how to defend those rights. The third was to know the ways of the human heart so well that you can be neither cheated nor fooled. There isn't a school in the United States, certainly not a public school, that would *dream* of trying to aim for those goals.

LAPHAM: What are principles four and five?

GATTO: Four deals with the relation of citizens to experts: a citizen must never be intimidated by experts; experts deal only in facts, but important decisions are matters of philosophy and valuing, not fact. So the expert must always be subordinate. And five is that an educated person possesses useful knowledge: how to build a house, how to grow food, how to make a dress, etc.

JORDAN: I would add to our list the ability to work collaboratively toward a common goal. We had an extraordinary opportunity this year to do community-service projects as a team. A hundred kids raised, in a penny harvest, $800. They each brought in 800 pennies. The kids elected, from each class, two representatives who developed a committee to disburse these funds. They did research on local organizations that were in need. They learned how to negotiate. It started off that whenever Maricruz, a very popular child in the fifth grade—for good reason: she's dynamic, she's honest, she's bright—whenever Maricruz had an idea, everyone would say, "Let's do that. Let's do what Mari says." But over time, they learned how to assess the idea as separate from the proponent of the idea, to ask hard questions about whether this particular charity would benefit most from the money. And they came up with very good results, which they then reported back to the student body. That is what the faculties of good start-up schools are doing. They are working together to start a school that is worthy of its kids.

XII. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

LAPHAM: Let's say we're one of those faculties. We've got some sense of what our mission is, and we've identified some of the essentials that must be taught. But what about the details? What is our curriculum?

GATTO: How about the active literacies, to start with? The thing the British colonial government of America hated worst of all was that ordinary people in this country were getting access to the *active* literacies. Not just to reading, which is useful for clerks to be able to do, but to various forms of public speaking and writing, which enable you to enlarge your zone of influence.

JORDAN: Agreed, but it does start with the book. Our fifth graders are reading *Night John* right now, which is a wonderful Gary Paulsen book about a twelve-year-old girl, a slave girl, who learns to read. And the power of reading is so palpable in that book. It's a wonderful way for the fifth grade—the first year of our school—to begin, because it communicates that reading is not something they are required to do as some sort of punishment between nine and eleven in the morning.

LAPHAM: So the books we pick are not necessarily the ones that would be handed around by a school system.

JORDAN: You find a teacher who knows how to pick a good book.

STEWART: Which has to do with Ted's point about understanding the broader culture surrounding the school. You have to try to tie the curriculum to the culture of the child, of the family. If students can read about places that are nearby or people that are familiar, then it makes reading lively. At LearnNow we have worked with many people who have been isolated in their communities—I mean, they have never gone more than five miles beyond their homes. That makes it really difficult to get them excited about reading. They feel that if what they read is not relevant to their world, their tiny world, then it's not worth learning.

LAPHAM: Then let's be specific. Let's say we're in the Bronx, and we're in the fourth grade. What are we doing with the day?

GATTO: I would use the first week to impose a strong academic structure, but I'd constantly say, and write on the board, that here are all these other opportunities that you can use, in lieu of what I'm doing, if you can get your mother's clearance. By the end of the second week, year after year, there are seven kids who have already identified themselves as being on their own career track. At that point they have a minimum amount of use sitting around in a class and pretending to listen while they're drawing comic books. There is one kid I'm thinking of. We found out that a famous comic-book writer was taking a master's up at Columbia, and I assigned him to spy on her—I guess stalk her—for about four days. He said that she always goes to the A & P on 111th Street. I [illegible] him fifteen dollars and told him to go over there and say, "Listen, I'm a big fan of what you're doing and I want to do it myself someday. I want to buy you a pizza, please, and I won't bother you ever again." Well, he ended up having a weekly apprenticeship [illegible] writer. So I get rid of the kids who already know what they are doing, though I'm available to them throughout the day. Now I've got twenty-three kids left, and I say, "Look, you don't have to spend more than two days a week in here. In that time, we can do about nine times what the gifted-and-talented classes are doing, so you won't have any trouble holding your head up in the building." And then I'd work with them individually until I had about half the kids out every day.

LAPHAM: In other words, you tried to match what they wanted to know

GATTO: [illegible] with what I knew about New York City and with what I knew about learning. It wasn't always a perfect match, but it was a good enough match that in ninety days, sometimes eighty, I didn't have any discipline problems at all. My kids would turn from, you know, whining, dishonest, greedy boys and girls into young men and women. In front of my eyes.

JORDAN: Your ability as a teacher is exceptional, John, but we take, clearly, a different approach.

LAPHAM: Fill the day in for me.

JORDAN: In the fifth grade, students spend half of their day in some sort of language-arts activity—novel reading, reading-comprehension skills, writing, more traditional grammar; a significant portion of their time in math skills [illegible] tory and science; and, at the end of the [illegible] between four and five, they will engage, in an in depth way, in the arts. So they won't have [illegible] sic class for fifty minutes once a week and [illegible] al-arts class for fifty minutes—what I [illegible] music for fifty minutes a week? A very good music teacher once said, "You [illegible] algebra appreciation. Why [illegible] to have music appreciation? [illegible]

Every teacher should realize the dignity of his calling; that he is a social servant set apart for the maintenance of proper social order and the securing of the right social growth. In this way the teacher always is the prophet of the true God and the usherer in of the true kingdom of God.

—JOHN DEWEY (1897)





THE SCHOOL, like the factory, is a thoroughly regimented institution. . . . Its daily routine is ordered by bells, from the first bell in the morning to the last bell in the afternoon, the general routine of which the same . . . "recreation period" in which children learn . . . from books prescribed by the school. "recreation period." In fact, the bell tells an adult teacher what the book has said; one hears children reciting the births of the Czars in one recitation period, the rules of [illegible] in another, the "parts of speech" in a third; the method is much the same. With high school come some differences; more "vocational" and "laboratory" work varies the periods. But here again the [illegible] recitation method, the chief characteristic of education. For nearly an hour a teacher asks questions and pupils answer, then a bell rings, on the instant books bang, powder and mirrors come out, there is a buzz of talk and laughter as all the urgent business of living resumes momentarily for the children, notes and "dates" are exchanged, five minutes pass, another bell, gradual sliding into seats, a final [illegible] and another class is begun . . .

[illegible] training afforded by courses of [illegible] laboratory kind of training, particularly during the high school years. The high school, with its athletics, clubs, sororities and fraternities, dances and parties, and other "extracurricular activities," is a fairly complete social cosmos in itself, and [illegible]

ing degrees of their elders' manners, clothes, personal attractiveness, male physical prowess, school clubs, election to positions of leadership—are all for the first time set going with a population as yet largely undifferentiated as regards their business class and working class parents. This informal training is not a preparation for a vague future that must be taken on trust, as is the case with so much of the academic work to many of the boys and girls in high school this is "the life," the thing they personally like best about going to school. . . .

Parents insist upon more and more education as part of their children's birthright, editors and lecturers point to education as a solution for every kind of social ill; . . . Education is a faith, a religion, to Middletown. And yet when one looks more closely at the dominant belief in the magic of formal schooling, it appears that it is not what actually goes on in the schoolroom that these many voices laud. Literacy, yes, do want their children to be able to read the newspaper, write a letter, and perform the ordinary operations of arithmetic," but, beyond that, many of them are little interested in what the schools teach. This thing, education, appears to be desired frequently not for its specific content but as a symbol—by the working class as an open sesame that will mysteriously admit their children to a world closed to them, and by the [illegible] as a heavily sanctioned aid in getting on further economically or socially in the world.

ROBERT S. LYND AND HELEN MERRELL LYND
"Training the Young,"
Middletown: A Study in American Culture *(1929)*

deavor—violin, cello, painting or [illegible]. And you have to start very early because you want to get that activity and develop a real ability to play in movement. You want to start [illegible] activity, motor skills. And then you build social capital wherever you can. We have an extraordinary opportunity in that we are actually building our school, our permanent facility. We can [illegible] and ask for their input in building design. You bring the would-be funders in to talk with the kids: this is why the kids can't [illegible] going out into the world and finding [illegible]. We motivate a child but more and bring those opportunities in.

GATTO: Can I ask a question, Kristin? These lovely kids, who have musical ability and artistic ability and are learning motor coordination—why couldn't all the frail and old people of New York [illegible] watch those kids as the art became set design and costume design and the music became recitals? Why couldn't the kids put on a traveling theater program for the old people of New York? Why wouldn't they learn more these things in reality rather than simulating them?

[illegible]: Well, they do. They actually [illegible] to Westchester to perform for [illegible] school children. And they do it for our parents.

GATTO: Wonderful. I mean really, wonderful. Now, in a forty-week school year, why couldn't we see that one day a week the kids were going to be learning about a different group of people and [illegible] those people pass their [illegible] to?

JORDAN: It's a time-management question. If they [illegible] with their instruments one day a week, they are not in their recitation class, reading *Scarlet Letter* or their [illegible]. And I think that becomes a very complicated proposition for a school.

GATTO: What if none of them were doing that?

JORDAN: What happens when only *some* of them read Chapter 12 in class one day? It becomes very difficult for teachers to move on. I think one of the real [illegible] that teachers—the

Who cares for the individuality of a person that cannot aid heroically in the conquest of nature or in creating social combinations and the development of institutions for the benefit of man. The individuality of the illiterate is mostly an unrealized possibility.

W. T. HARRIS (1907)

school to be able to learn how to write." So it is not unreasonable for [illegible] to give you some good writing [illegible] to do six months from now or seven months from now." And they say, "Wow, I'll never be able to do that." And we say, "Yes, you will." It is a very *simple* school. All the high schools I visited around the country for my high-school study are incredibly complex. Their [illegible] are interlocked they are frozen. This school is not frozen. It's a three-period day: two hours, two hours, two hours. You can *stop* the school when something happens or when there is an interesting subject. It is supple, because it is simple and focused.

ACADEME, n. *An ancient school where morality and philosophy were taught.*

ACADEMY, n. *(from academe.) A modern school where football is taught.*

—AMBROSE BIERCE (1911)

I think the legal contract, an agreement to collaborate, is vital. We are very explicit with our students and parents who is interested, about the student-family-teacher triangle. We share one another's home phone numbers and talk in the evenings. Usually it's about a simple homework question, but that opens up lines of communication for when there is a difficulty on the bus. You hear from the child or the parent when that child gets home, even if you're already home. The relationship goes beyond a particular block of forty-five minutes. And it is important to formalize that relationship. Our contract is less than two pages, and it is the basis of each party's understanding: the teacher's commitment, the student's commitment, the parents' commitment.

STEWART: Before LearnNow I co-founded and ran a public boarding school called the SEED School, and we made a huge effort to bring parents into [illegible] Many of our parents have been marred by their public-school experience. A lot of low-income parents will tell you, "When I left school, I swore I would never go back." And then they had children. So they are [illegible] But they are expected to be advocates for their children. We spent a lot of time trying to reconcile this tension by making home visits to all the families. We [illegible] know, x thousands of dollars to run this school. We get about half of it through a public-school allocation. We think we can raise about another 40 percent, and then we're still going to be 10 percent short. So we tell the parents that we want them to participate in what we call a "time-dollar" concept. We will give them $15 an hour for every hour that they donate to the school, but we don't give them money. They chaperone, they tutor, they monitor two hours of homework sessions in the evenings, they carpool. And we track their contributions. At the end of the year we can say to them, "You donated $45,000 to the school." What we said at the beginning is that when people ask us, "Why is your school successful?" if we can't say, *first*, "The parents," then we've failed.

LAPHAM: This raises an important question: How do we fund this school of ours? What if a school that is truly worthy of its kids simply costs more than taxpayers are willing to pay?

GATTO: Why shouldn't schools be self-funding and self-maintaining?

LAPHAM: How do you mean self-funding? Self-funding in Tom's way? Penny harvests?

GATTO: All I can throw out here are a few experiments that I tried, and I was operating inside a school system with very little cooperation. I would send the kids all over the West Side, from Columbia University down to Lincoln Center, to make a small business map of the area—the location, the type of business. Then I'd distribute the kids for three days to spy on individual businesses and see how many transactions they estimated, and we did this with street peddlers too. Someone came by from the community planning board and said, "You know, we've been talking about doing this for years. Could we have that data when you're done with it?" And it occurred to me that a lot of the things kids can do have a cash value. There is no reason that a school should be a parasite at all. I went to school in the forties, and kids *always* prepared the lunch and did the custodial services, and we *fought* for the privilege of doing it.

LAPHAM: *Oliver Twist*. Principal Fagin.

GATTO: I feel like Fagin sometimes.

STEWART: I certainly in the public sector the money should follow the child rather than the district. I, the parent, should pick the school. The money to support the formal education of my child should be made available to that school, as long as it was public. In Massachusetts the money follows the child in the case of regional technical vocational high schools. The money follows the child in the case of children with special needs. I think in the whole blooming system the money should follow the child. And I also think that every child should have the right to apply for admission to *any* school,

irrespective of its immediate jurisdiction. The dirty secret of public education is that it is profoundly segregated by social class. And the only way to break that hammerlock is to get rid of jurisdictions. Any family in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, whether they live in the inner city or in a rural area, can get into the lottery to go to our school, which, by the way, has a smaller per-pupil expenditure than most of the comprehensive high schools in our region. So the money following the child serves several masters. It's not just about getting the money where it should go, if the family has choice. It also breaks the back of the segregation of the public sector. Are these "vouchers"? In a way they are—functioning for children in a manner that the G.I. Bill functioned for me and others in my generation.

JORDAN: I think there is a growing realization that just because a school is segregated, just because a school serves primarily low-income kids, doesn't mean that it has to be a bad school. It's similar in some ways to single-sex education. If you have an all-girls school, only girls will be the leaders. All the top performers will be girls; the editor of the newspaper will be a girl. In a school that serves only low-income students, all the applicants to Harvard and Yale will be low-income students. The student-body president will be a low-income student. I would much rather see a system in which the dollars truly follow the children and in which children of different economic classes went to school together. But we can't wait for that to happen. We can't sit back and say, "Well, once the system desegregates itself, then we'll be able to teach poor children."

STEWART: We have to make a distinction between what is allocated for the classroom and what actually makes it into the classroom. If you look at budgets—particularly those of big public-school systems—they include all sorts of inefficiencies: legal services, special education, personnel costs. Only five to ten cents on the dollar actually make it into the classroom. There are tens of thousands, if not millions, of young people who deserve something better. And so our company was created to build an entire system of schools. We go into a low-income—what we call "under-resourced"—community, identify community leaders and parents, and say to them, "We would like you to embrace this approach." And if they are willing to do it, then we sit down with them and refine it, because all schools look different, regardless of what the model is. The reason we went for-profit is that we are able to draw funds through private and public entities and reallocate those resources to places that just don't have them. The Mississippi delta doesn't have the resources that are available in places like New York and Pennsylvania. The other critical thing is the teacher issue. We are able to do national searches on behalf of our local partners and to provide incentives for teachers to go places they wouldn't otherwise go.

GATTO: Do you have to use certified teachers, Tom?

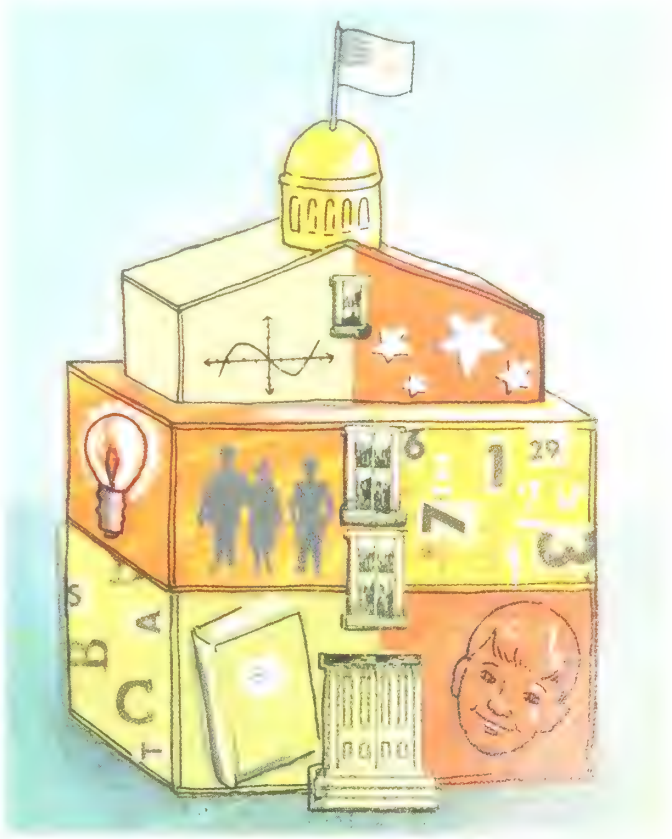
STEWART: In some cases we do. In some states upwards of 75 percent of your teaching staff needs to be certified, and then they give you a reasonable period of time to do something with the other 25 percent or so.

GATTO: That's a real obstacle to getting anything done. There is a huge amount of floating talent that is *free* in this society. Think of all the retired people, the unemployed artists.

LAPHAM: But how would they get into the system? The unions won't let them in, right?

GATTO: The unions and the teachers colleges, which really are much more sophisticated at influencing legislation.

LAPHAM: Could I teach at your school, Kristin—or your school, Ted—without being certified?



SIZER: Sure.

JORDAN: Yes. We don't have *any* certified teachers.

SIZER: My only teacher certification is in Victoria, Australia, and I've done okay. But let me give a little pitch for unions. There are several hundred

in New York that would not have been able to do

Federation of Teachers, particularly Sandy Feld-

eleven pilot schools, which some people call "in-district charters," are the result of the collective-bargaining agreement between the Boston teachers' union and the city of Boston. Several of those schools have been around awhile now, and the

they graduate, and they go to college. The charter is simply one of a number of mechanisms. It's a means, it's not an end.

the schools against all the nonunion talent?

SIZER: The historical reason for unions is the corruption of school districts. In many cities the union has been the only protection that kids had from a rapacious city government.

GATTO: But what's the justification for certification?

SIZER: That's a separate issue from the unions.

GATTO: It is—and I'm not beating on the unions—but there is a huge amount of free talent available that we can't access. The Columbia University retired-faculty chapter is enormous, and it includes department heads—there are *thousands* of people potentially available. There are hundreds available *immediately* who have tremendous knowledge and ability. And a lot of them just hang around the campus waiting for something to do. The last two years I taught I connected my class with the retired-faculty chapter at Columbia, and there was no resistance whatsoever. I have a feeling that New York City alone, you could duplicate that experience very, very easily.

SIZER: I don't think that's going to solve the big problem. The big problem is: *good people don't take and stay in jobs that don't entrust them with important things.* Smart college graduates look at the way the system works now and say, "Well, maybe for a few years, Teach for America or something, but the system doesn't trust me, and there is no way I am going to make this a lifelong career." So any solution to the teacher-quality problem has to reflect the movement of authority *downward.* Authority and accountability must be shifted down to the individual school, with the right of those faculties and their leadership to pick their own members, wherever those members may come from.

GATTO: I don't think we disagree, Ted. What I believe possible and valuable, though, is the movement of authority even further downward than the individual school, opening the teaching function to everyone who has value to confer, to retired businesspeople as well as to academics, to housewives, to shut-ins, to college students—the works.

about the de-monopolization of public education—not the privatization of public education, not even the deregulation of public education. The *de-monopolization.* As long as public education in this country remains a monopoly of the state, teachers will take one look at what goes on in a school—particularly a large, urban public school—and say, "I'm not sticking around here for very long."

JORDAN: Earlier in my career I wanted to be a New York City public-school teacher. I knew that because there was such a teacher shortage, I wouldn't have to go to a teachers college, but as I tried to find my way in I got absolutely frustrated with the bureaucracy—I couldn't have gone to 110 Livingston Street one more time and remained sane. The system as it is constructed does not effectively help teachers to develop their tal-

LAPHAM: What does a good teacher need to know?

JORDAN: Good teachers need to know how to keep their students engaged in the question at hand, a task that varies quite a bit from the very early primary years to the middle-school years to the high-school years. They need to figure out how to reach students who have very different learning styles. They need to define the purpose of their lesson, and then get their students to achieve that purpose.

GATTO: They've got to be real people! The real people don't have any trouble in these schools. The kids understand that there is something authentic. Once a kid came to me and said, "You're different from the other teachers. You talk to us the same way you talk to the principal. You talk to everybody the same way." I was brought up to do that. Not to adjust my discourse from one audience to another. It's why babies cry in my presence.

JORDAN: I take issue with that, because we have brought in regular people whom our kids eat alive.

GATTO: They've got to know something too! And they have to be dynamic. Remember, we've locked these people in and immobilized them; the only hope for a productive encounter in such radical circumstances is to restore vitality to the equation. The kids know if someone is bankrupt of ideas. And they will not forgive lifelessness.

JORDAN: No, no, no! These are very interesting people! But they were not effective in reaching a fifth- and sixth-grade audience. They were using vocabulary beyond the students' reach.

GATTO: I always do that!

JORDAN: They were creating activities that lost their students. There is a *skill* involved in teaching.

LAPHAM: And how does one learn that skill?

JORDAN: Good teachers find ways to get constant feedback going in their classroom. Some can do the majority of that work on their own, but I think a "master teacher," someone from the outside, who is there to coach, is invaluable.

SIZER: You have to know your subject *so well*—

JORDAN: Cold.

SIZER: —so well that you have real confidence. Whether you are a first-year teacher or a thirty-year veteran, if you go into an English classroom and aren't well read, and don't have a passion for reading and writing, then you are just tinkering.

[illegible]: Kids know immediately. You have to teach *something*, and the kids have an unerring radar for whether or not you know what you are talking about. And by "something" I don't mean the Board of Ed's lesson plans — they lack insight and even accurate information. If somebody says, "Why should I learn Shakespeare?" you should be able to answer *immediately*, because *you* understand the value of it.

SIZER: In Massachusetts the way to solve a teacher shortage, it appears, is to demand more tests, more training courses, more credits!

SHEWAKI: And the irony is that the people who successfully scale those barriers can become the most harmful types of educators in the classroom. Somebody once said, "Hurt people hurt people." Just as students have an innate ability to discern someone who understands the subject matter, I believe dropouts, or students who cut a particular teacher's class, have an innate ability to discern when somebody is trying to harm them. Unfortunately, a lot of states produce teachers who are better prepared to harm students than to support their development.

JORDAN: Look at what people have to do to get certified in New York State. They have to go through an education process, this vetting system, that will probably cost about $30,000. This eliminates a whole group of people who could best connect to the low-income kids we're trying to educate. Then these would-be teachers have to take time out from more interesting endeavors in their lives to go through, in some states, an inane examination process, which measures we're not sure what, and then they're forced to spend hour upon hour going to the Board of Ed and figuring out which forms to fill out and getting papers stamped and finding out that they are still delinquent somewhere. The people who are willing to tolerate that are not your feisty types. And so the process is validating exactly the opposite type of person that each of us sees as the most effective teacher.

SIZER: It's always necessary to remember that there are *reasons* for this gridlock. The history of these oppressive certification laws is that they came out of *extraordinary* abuse by a system in which some mayor's half-drunk, illiterate uncle was hired to teach twelfth-grade English.

LAPHAM: Let's say we do all the things you four have suggested: hire knowledgeable, interesting, and uncertified teachers, including some adults from retired university professors to corporate executives to do internships; make house calls; teach a few essential subjects well rather than many subjects poorly; make the school day more supple. How, then, will we determine whether the program is working? How will we be able to discriminate between our graduates and those of competing schools? Do we need a standardized test?

[O]ur brighter young people [are] saturating themselves today with a mass of knowledge that can have little application for the lives which most of them must inevitably lead. Disappointment and discontent are almost sure to be the result, and . . . among its educated classes are not good for any nation.

— ELLWOOD P. CUBBERLY (1911)

SIZER: We're caught in a rhetorical trap, because the words "standards" and "standardization" now overlap. You are perceived to be against "standards" if you challenge the notion of standardization. The notion that there likely is more than one definition of intellectual power is very frightening to people who say, "We're going to have one best system, and by golly we'll enforce it."

LAPHAM: So you would be against national standards, even state standards?

SIZER: Absolutely, if arrayed in current ways.

JORDAN: And yet, as a result of God knows which forces, there is an entire class of American children who are not learning the fundamentals. They do not know how to decode words. They do not know basic math-computation skills. These skills must be learned. Without content and without skills, critical thinking is useless. It's wonderful for kids to learn how to discuss questions of justice and equality, but their arguments make them fools when they don't know the difference between the Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement. An enormous number of [illegible] selves off the hook in terms [illegible] on the grounds that the [illegible] to think." I'm not sure that standardized exams are the best way [illegible] of skill and content is being learned, but what is the alternative?

SIZER: Well, I think you need a variety of things. I

think the good standardized tests are terrific. What [illegible] standardized test? The SAT?

SIZER: In part, but I'm a great believer in resuscitating the nineteenth-century notion of exhibitions, where a high-school student supposedly masters this material and the way to think about it, then defends that mastery in a public setting in front of people who might ask him to apply the knowledge to some unfamiliar situation. That's the real test of serious knowledge. The ultimate test of a good *education* is what you do by habit when no one is looking. At our school, the kids and parents are shown a set of skills and content standards for the three levels involved, and the kids work to exhibit mastery enough to move to the next level. Every piece of student work is kept and revised until it meets the standard, then it goes into a portfolio. The collection of work that meets the standard is under constant scrutiny by the teacher who knows that kid, as well as by that kid's guardian.

LAPHAM: But if you have no state or national standards, where do you get the material? The content that you are talking about, Kristin? The Civil War and the Civil Rights Movement?

JORDAN: I think at an elementary level we could probably agree on most elements of a curriculum.

STEWART: Our company is getting an increasing number of calls from chartering authorities who raise your point, Lewis. We have fifteen charters under our sphere of influence; now we are being told that we have to hold these charters accountable. The result is that all students who graduate from one of our schools will be able to research, write, and orally defend a fifteen- to twenty-page essay. They will be able to do advanced mathematics of some form. And science and technology are very important—technology not only as a subject matter but as a tool. But each school has a different approach, a different mission, and that's as it should be. Charters should be as unique as their students are.

SIZER: Right. And this is a central point, because the assumption behind an imposed standard is that the people are not to be trusted. The issue of academic freedom is fundamental here. One need only look at the curriculum materials in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to see the ideological spin: it's a consistent spin, but it's just *one* [illegible] at the same time forcing the substance of these disciplined [illegible] thinking habits. Ultimately, though, you have to trust the judgment of the people running them: parents and teachers. The current mood is *utterly* distrustful.

LAPHAM: In Tom's school the student has to defend a fifteen-page essay. In Ted's school the student has to exhibit mastery of the curriculum. What is your measure at the end, Kristin?

JORDAN: It's a combination. It's performance on certain standardized tests; it's the successful completion of a science project, using the scientific method in its traditional form; it's the preparation and defense of an essay on an historical topic: different activities and different standards at different grade levels.

LAPHAM: Do you reserve the right *not* to award whatever the passing mark is?

JORDAN: Of course. At some grade levels in some subjects, there is an internal committee that evaluates. In others, usually at a benchmark year—eighth grade or twelfth grade—there are outside experts who are brought in to listen to the orchestra play particular pieces or to determine if the students have met a certain standard for writing.

LAPHAM: Can you do that with a for-profit operation, Tom? Can you say to a parent, "Well, the student didn't make it and he'll have to do it again"?

STEWART: The research is showing that *neither* social promotion nor retention really works. What teachers are being told now is, "Regardless of what grades you give and receive, if your students don't score well on the standardized tests, your job could be lost." And the students are being told, "Do well or you could be retained." Imagine a seventh-grade teacher who inherits half a class of students who are not prepared for the seventh grade—nobody *cares* about what happened a year before or five or six years before. All the teacher knows is, "These students are now on my docket, and *I'm* going to be scored on whether I get them to the next grade level." And that's what happens, in the worst cases.

GATTO: I think genius is as common as air, and we have never had the imagination to figure out a social order or an economy that can deal with anything but a minority of the human talent out there. Why do any of you think that charter schools, or any other kind of schools, need closer scrutiny than, say, Groton or Saint Paul's? By eighth grade, most of the kids know that grades are irrelevant. The kids who are going to be anointed by the system know that whatever they do the grades will be sufficient to move them along to the next level. Very few are dropped out, because their parents will come in and raise hell. And to the kids who know by then that they are losers, and don't see a future in any of the appointed careers, it's irrelevant. It isn't that they don't know science or English. They don't care!

Let me tell you how I know they don't care. I began to sabotage my own tests fairly early in my career by telling kids exactly what the questions would be. But toward the end of my career I became *flagrant* at doing it, providing the kids with both the questions and the "best" acceptable answers the day before the test was given. It turned out that there was no improvement in anybody's performance. In most cases, it was irrelevant

whether they had the right answer or not. The only explanation that makes sense is that, despite protestations to the contrary, the kids *knew* that the tests would have no bearing on their lives—and they were right.

SIZER: Crime doesn't pay.

GATTO: I'd like to ask *you*, Lewis, an impertinent question. Did you ever, in your entire life, ask anybody you hired what his or her grades were in English?

LAPHAM: No.

GATTO: And did you ever ask your barber what his grade was in barber college? We all have an innate understanding of quality. I've been a schoolteacher for thirty years, and I've never been in a classroom for more than two days without knowing *exactly* who would get the A's, the A minuses, the B's. And I would make the subject of the next unit I taught *why* I knew those things, and why it was utterly irrelevant, because neither standardized tests nor grades correlate with anything of any value other than the peace of mind of the schoolteacher and maybe of the school board.

SIZER: I've been teaching almost as long as you have, John, and I am constantly amazed by what some of my students do and do not do. In my view, and fortunately, kids are constantly changing. The incompetent, disconnected dreamer last year walks in this year and is quite different!

GATTO: As we sit here and talk, 2 million kids, *2 million*, are involved in home-schooling, and what we're talking about here is a light-year leap away from that kind of thinking. I would hate my children to have to compete with these home-schooled children twenty years down the line, because home-schooled kids become human beings and people at about the age of ten or eleven, maybe even before that. Read Ben Franklin's *Autobiography*, and you'll see that out of a family of seventeen in a candlemaker's house, Franklin is putting himself, at the age of twelve, through a curriculum that Harvard wouldn't dream of imposing on its freshmen, and furthermore he's working sixty hours a week while doing it! And he's not some transcendental genius. He's a nasty little boy, and he grows up to be a nasty man. But when it came time to convince the French to fund the American Revolution, this candlemaker's son apparently had no difficulty with the French language. Under our noses, the record of American history and even the record of the American present is replete with examples of people from every social class shucking this system and beginning to use their time to their own advantage. They just leap ahead. Look at the Williams sisters! They didn't have the money to get a tennis coach or to go to tennis camp. And the father, who was a sharecropper's son, said to the girls, "It's so easy to do. We'll watch videos we check out of the library, and we'll read the [illegible] in the [illegible] know, you put your thumb here and your index finger there . . ."

[illegible]: I think we all have the capacity to become feisty individuals like Benjamin Franklin and the Williams sisters, and some of us will do that if left to our own devices. But I wouldn't ever have done it if I had been left to my own devices. I needed coaxing. I needed teachers. I needed confidence building. I needed engagement with caring adults.

GATTO: For twelve years? I think you're down-rating yourself. It takes about ninety days for the worst kid, who is as timid as a rabbit, or the one who is totally unsocial, to be able to walk over to the Park Bernet galleries to an exhibition and, when someone says, "You can't come in," to say, "I beg your pardon, my mother is upstairs." It takes thirty hours to teach somebody how to read. *Thirty hours*—that's all. Fifty hours for the entire math curriculum, and I'm citing the guy who was on 60 *Minutes* recently, Dan Greenberg of the Sudbury Valley School.

JORDAN: I wish it were so easy!

GATTO: Dan Greenberg said to me that in running the Sudbury Valley School he's learned that the entire basic math curriculum is twenty hours of contact time, and then the students are self-managing. I can tell you that kids from Harvard [illegible]—excuse me, Harlem, though I guess they're equivalent—it takes kids from Harlem just ninety days to win essay contests. Ninety days. Now, if you give them 180 days, you can deepen that a bit, and if you give them four or five years of *engagement* with the world, you've really got something.

LAPHAM: But how do you do that in a school? Is that your question, Kristin?

JORDAN: Yes. That's always the question. Two students come to mind. Thelma is a student who I think would be just fine without us. She is inquisitive, she is analytical, she learns in the way that I learn, which is probably why I think she's so smart—I'll acknowledge my own biases there. From day one she was on top of the lesson and beyond it. Contrast with her Robert, who is everywhere except on point *most* of the time. Now, Robert had a substitute teacher the other day who came up with a wonderfully creative way of engaging him. The exercise was to build a structure with a piece of blue paper and a piece of [illegible] low paper—you could cut it, you could tear it, you could bend it, but you weren't given tape. And your aim was to make your structure as high as possible. Robert made an absolutely brilliant structure. The[illegible] to [illegible] exercise at all. The point of the story is that it does something different for every child. [illegible] education is so complicated, and that's why education is such an [illegible] people involved. ■

THE HIGHER YEARNING

Bringing eros back to academe

By Cristina Nehring

"G[illegible] that Aristippus, [illegible], thought it to honour me with marriage . . . it would be dearer and more [illegible] his Impress but your whore." So wrote a student to her teacher in [illegible] that is, wrote Héloise to Abelard, after their consignment to separate [illegible].

They are brave words these: brave in that they spurn respectability; brave in their renunciation of all worldly advantage. But they are brave, too, because they reveal the erotic fire that can flare within a pedagogical relationship —and they suggest the power, the pride, and the courage that [illegible].

Then, as now, sex in the classroom was taboo. Then, as now, the participants were punished: the medieval professor castrated, his student shamed; both dispatched to monasteries. And then, as now, the net gain to thought and instruction was [illegible].

Héloise and Abelard's love was reckless at the outset. It was consummated and exuberant. The two were discovered in bed together; they sang songs to each other in public; they generated and ignored gossip; they made love in the corners of convent cafeterias. But if the sexual passion between the teenage Héloise and her thirty-eight-year-old philosophy tutor lasted only a couple of years, the intellectual passion it spawned lasted a lifetime. Abelard was sixty-three when he died, and until the end of his days he wrote letters to his absent Héloise, and she to him. They are letters of philosophical argument; they are sermons; they are hymns; they are biblical commentaries; they are declarations of love —they are also one of the most moving bodies of prose in medi[illegible] literature. A love that, at its origin, was pure [illegible] for Abelard became the occasion for his gre[illegible] literary accomplishment. A love that for Hél[illegible] was an act of godlessness became the incentive [illegible] theological meditation of an order unrivale[illegible] any female cleric of the period.

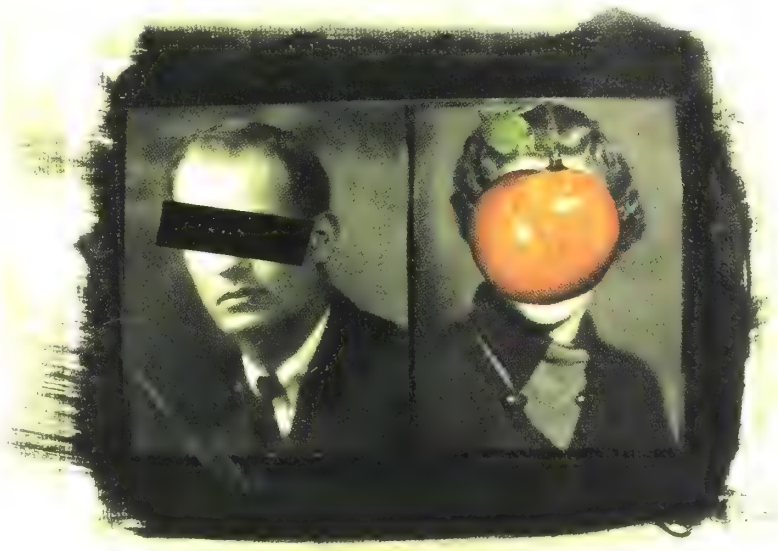
But it is not only reckless—nor even cons[illegible] mated—love that generates such feverish achie[illegible] ment. More often than not, it is, as Sai[illegible] Exupéry once said, "in a love that vainly ye[illegible] from behind prison bars you have perchance [illegible] love supreme." More often than not, it is in a [illegible] and repressed passion—a passion, for exam[illegible] such as that shared by Martin Heidegger and H[illegible] nah Arendt—that we find the source of grea[illegible] creativity. Heidegger wrote to his young Marb[illegible] freshman in stilted and longing tones, as she [illegible] to him; he did not leave his wife for her, nor [illegible] she shirk her suitors for him. Their love was [illegible] cretive and circumscribed, and yet not the [illegible] generative for that. It inflamed her interest [illegible] launched her career in philosophy; it gave him [illegible] provocation he needed to do fresh work at a r[illegible] ment when he felt his theories going stale. It [illegible] the beginning of a dialogue that transcend[illegible] decades and world wars, national, religious, [illegible] moral boundaries. For all the limitations of th[illegible] relationship, and for all Heidegger's now fam[illegible] limitations as a human being in World Wa[illegible] Germany, the chemistry between him and Are[illegible] fired and informed their greatest work.

Much the same could be said of Auguste Ro[illegible] and Camille Claudel, Paul Verlaine and Arth[illegible] Rimbaud, Socrates and his many, changing, l[illegible] ing pupils. Teacher-student chemistry is wi[illegible]

[illegible] Paris XIII. Her last article for* Harper's Magazine, [illegible] issue. *She is working on her first book.*

s much of the best work that goes on at uni-
ties, today as always. It need not be reckless,
d not be *edgy*. It need not even be artic-
d, or mutual. In most cases, in fact, it is none
se. In most cases, academic eros works from
d the scenes. It lingers behind the curtain
nsures that the production on stage is strong
sures that the work in the classroom is
ged, ambitious, and vigorous. In most cases,
uld be counterproductive for it to
ge itself into the limelight. That said,
casionally does. And *when* it does, it
not be criminalized. For the university
us on which the erotic impulse between
ers and students is criminalized is the
us on which the pedagogical enterprise
lated. It is the campus on which peda-
is gutted and goted. Thus, unfortunately
the scenario that confronts us today.
ce upon a time "sexual harassment"
mpuses meant the exchange of grades
ex—academic for erotic favors. Thanks,
rt, to the war waged by feminists for
ty-five years, such tawdry practices are
all but defunct. A professor who "ha-
s" students today, in the sense most
e outside the Ivory Tower still associ
with "sexual harassment," is as self-
uctive as a suicide bomber, and almost
re. But the war has proceeded anyway.
ct, the conquering army has mush-
ied, the propaganda multiplied, and the
et expanded beyond recognition. The
unacknowledged casualty of this cam-
paign has been pedagogy.

Sexual harassment is to America's contem-
y college system what atheism was to Shake-
re's England: the charge you throw at
never you want to hurt when you can't think
ything else. Harassment can now be "envi-
ental," "secondhand," and "third-party"—
which essentially means it can be victim-
Or, more precisely, the victim can be
tified and spoken for by someone else, even
st her will. It can consist of a word (say,
," addressed to a student); a lesson plan (a
y of Greek sculpture); a look, compliment,
ism, flirtation gone sour, or consensual love
erpreted in the cold hard light of its demise.
consist of a consensual love in *full bloom*,
ded someone can be found to make a fuss.
glance at the policy statements of America's
rsities reveals definitions striking in their
phousness. Harvard's guidelines forbid "jokes,
ions, or suggestions" that might be con-
d as carrying sexual meaning, as well as "per-
attention by an instructor" when "inap-
riate." Wellesley College outlaws all
propriate social invitations." (One wonders
how the hopeful suitor can know if a woman will
deem his suggestion "appropriate" until he makes
it, by which point it may be too late; she may al-
ready have filed charges.) Antioch College mys-
teriously condemns any behavior that "emphasizes
the gender" of a person, and, in a clause that may
prove the first in legal history to make logor-
rhea a punishable offense, prohibits "irrele-
vant comments."



But if ethical policy statements are fuzzy, unof-
ficial texts given students by a university's "sexu-
al-harassment officers" and ombudsmen are usu-
ally murkier still—and more misleading. Take that
old standby of harassment seminars, Billie Dziech
and Linda Weiner's 1990 *The Lecherous Professor*.
In training its readers to recognize common types
of predatory instructors, it describes "the public ha-
rasser," whom one may readily identify by the
fact that he "dress[es] up or down," and, moreover,
"seldom employs standard academic vocabulary."
As if this description did not cast its net wide
enough, the book proceeds to warn us of the *equal-
ly* dangerous "private harasser," who (guess what?)
"dresses conservatively" (not "up or down") and,
indeed, "often adheres to academic stereotypes" of
the very kind the *public* harasser would spurn. In
the unlikely event that we cannot find enough fac-
ulty members to damn via these diagnostics, the
next section offers a catalogue of personality pro-
files to put us on especial guard. It lists every imag-
inable character from "The Counselor-Helper"
(who wins you to his vicious ends by niceness) to
"The Intellectual Seducer" (who undoes you by his
intelligence). In fact, the only professorial type
conspicuously absent from this colorful gallery of
closet criminals is the one we might call "The
Unpleasant Idiot." If an instructor is [illegible]

and hostile, apparently, we can trust him—and only then.

Were people immune to self-pity and self-dramatization, immune to greed, and unperturbed in the face of romantic rejection, these texts might not wield the damage they do. But give a group of undifferently successful individuals of either sex a glass through which to view them-

If you wish to be applauded at an educational convention, vociferate sentiment platitudes about the sacred rights of the child, specifying particularly his right to happiness gained through freedom.

—WILLIAM C. BAGLEY (1935)

selves as very important victims, limited in their success not by the modesty of their own talents but by the ubiquitous insidiousness of the "system," and chances are good they will learn to use it. Mix in the resentment of a relationship gone awry, or a relationship desired but never obtained, and you begin to understand the source of a good number of sexual-harassment charges. Add to this a potent financial bait (women have reaped considerable rewards through harassment suits in which the burden of disproof was on the defendant and institutional sympathy entirely with the accuser), and the attraction of such charges becomes still clearer.

Such a case was the one brought by Michelle Gretzinger a few years ago against Ramdas Lamb, religious studies professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Trained and tutored by the "student advocate" on her campus (who introduced her to, among other texts, *The Lecherous Professor*), Gretzinger accused her former favorite teacher of nothing less than "serial rape." According to her testimony, he repeatedly forced her to accept rides from him to her apartment, where he then proceeded, time after time, for a month, to rape her. Yet Gretzinger had continued to show a pronounced personal fascination with Lamb throughout the period during which he was supposedly raping her, to enroll in elective classes he taught, to participate in extracurricular activities he led, and to hang around his office using his computer. Despite all this, the case proceeded. It proceeded for three and a half years, buttressed by letters of support from such vocal feminists as Michele Paludi, who, with no direct knowledge of the parties involved, proclaimed the "patterns" involved to be typical of real harassment. It generated roughly 2,000 pages of legal transcripts and won Gretzinger a large check.

The only thing atypical about the case is Gretzinger's charges were sufficiently extr gant that they could be—and ultimately we proven false. The $175,000 settlement give by the university was in compensation fo "delays in her case"—not in response to th tice of her charges. It was shown, in fact, t was physically impossible for her to have Lamb on many of the dates in question what, one wonders, would have happ if he *had* spent all that time in her a ment, without this signifying the leas mantic interest? Or what, to court blas my, if the two had actually *had* a flirta What if Gretzinger's oft manifested tion to Lamb was what it appeared to an attempt to seduce him—and he ha sponded to it, and, say, kissed her ir apartment? Still no hanging offense.

Yet he would have been doomed, his patently unwinnable. Distinctions bet rape and romance would have gone out the dow: they would have been impossible to n and nobody would have been interested in ing them anyway. A man who had studied a monk in India before joining a theolog partment in the United States would have s forever condemned as a "serial rapist," and G zinger would have received hundreds of t sands of dollars more than she already did as ration for her trauma.

Had she been smarter, Gretzinger would made her charges smaller. She would have plained, as did the accusers of New Hampshi professor Leroy Young, of a lunch to which had been taken "against her will." Or she w have reproached her professor, as they did th for a compliment on her blazer, a pat or shoulder that she had found disconcerting. plest of all, she could have decried the "ho ty" of the "environment" created by Lamb's ging of other people, as did a library staff me at another university in a sexual-harassmen against a more experienced colleague aroun same time. Had she done this, Lamb, like Yo like the librarian, would probably have beer missed from his position on the spot. Gretzir comparative failure owed only to the fact tha grabbed too many cookies and got her hand s in the jar. Had she realized how very few c ies she actually needed to get fat rewards fo efforts, her success would have been perfec

My own success would have been perfect I elected in the last few years to sue my fian professor at the university where I am com ing a doctorate, for our relationship. In fact suit was very nearly made on my behalf, against my will. When his superiors learned c relationship, the wheels of justice and pu ment began, immediately, to turn. No m



THE PURPOSE OF THIS chapter has been to explain some of the responsibilities of the secondary school brought about by present gravely uncertain national and world conditions:

1. The majority of young men will undergo a period of military service, following their high-school years. These youth should be:

a. Made aware of the vital need for their sacrifice and led to feel both a sense of duty and a sense of honor in their task
b. Helped to feel that during their absence the home, school, and community have a continued interest in them
c. Assured that their service is appreciated and that provision for their future education or work has been made.

2. For youth still in school, a pre-service orientation program, adapted to individual capacities, should be set up to include special instruction in:

a. Mathematics and science
b. Mechanics and electronics
c. Communication
d. Skills leading to self-reliance and health in emergencies
e. Ethical and moral conduct under military conditions
f. The location, background, and culture of foreign peoples.

3. The impact of the current uncertain times upon young women should be recognized by home, school, and community. The school should:

a. Give thoughtful and sympathetic personal guidance which takes into account the emotional and psychological factors which affect girls in such times
b. Help young girls to recognize and value their responsibilities in the struggle between democracy and totalitarianism
c. Enable girls to prepare themselves in vocational skills as well as in homemaking and cultural fields
d. Expand the curriculum in vocational areas of the type needed by girls.

4. All youth in the school should be:

a. Given a better comprehension of social, economic, and political problems confronting the United States and other nations
b. Taught history and world affairs in terms of the effect of men, movements, and events upon the struggle for human liberty
c. Helped to realize that to preserve freedom in America this nation must defend it in all parts of the world and lend support to its increase among peoples everywhere.

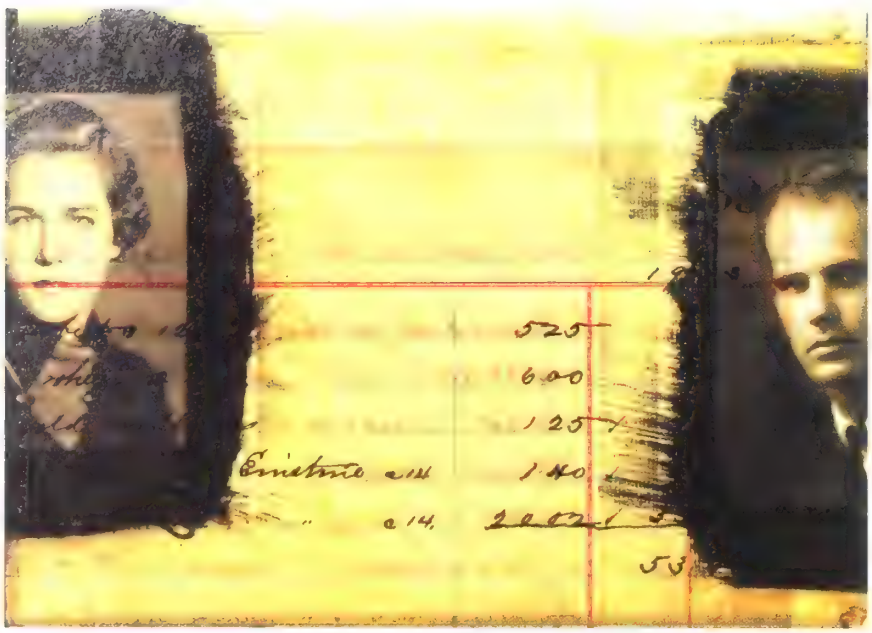
5. The responsibility for youth adjustment and education should be shared by the school, home, and community more greatly than hitherto. The school should take the initiative in bringing about closer cooperation between these agencies. The armed forces have a dual responsibility: to encourage youth to complete their secondary-school education and to enhance the educational value of their service in uniform

—EDUCATIONAL POLICIES COMMISSION, NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
Summary of "In this Uncertain World," Chapter 2 of Education for All American Youth: A Further Look (1952)

had never taken a class with him, or that
ked in a different department; no matter
ve had met off-campus, or, most impor-
, that I did not feel in any shape or form ha-
by him. Nobody cared. My view of the
r was declared "irrelevant." As a graduate
nt, I was presumably too "disempowered"
dge of my own abuse. Deans wrote letters,
made calls; hiring committees were warned
e "seriousness of the offense"; jobs were
ened—and I went unconsulted.
e point about such cases (among which the
and Young examples are formidably docu-
ed in Daphne Patai's study of the "sexual ha-
ent industry," *Heterophobia*) is not their in-
ial injustice, however astonishing. It is the
sive climate of fear on which they depend
which they continually aggravate. In our en-
ned contemporary university, men walk on
ells and women run from shadows. Every ges-
s suspect: if a colleague compliments you on
dress, it smacks of sexism; if a professor is
dly, he is readying you for future sexual abuse.
e is no kindness so innocent that women
ted in the "patterns" of harassment cannot
pize it as an instance of the newly identified
ty experts refer to as "grooming" the victim
e kill. Academic encouragement, easy jest-
n affectionate epithet—all of what used to
e currency of good fellowship as well as
ing—have become cause for vigilance, tod-
r complaint, the stuff of suits.
ne of the oddest developments in this story
ut a movement such as campus feminism,
n began with the aim of giving women more
r—more faith in their own resources; greater
nchisement, sexuality, and independence—
nded by infantilizing them to this extent, sen-
ng them to slights they never felt, making
alternately ridiculous (Gretzinger) and ir-
nt (me) in their own sexual-harassment
and training them to see themselves as re-
eless victims of resourceful men. It has end-
teaching them to run to their elders and fear
ark; to distrust male appreciation and de-
ze male attraction—to revert, in sum, into
rinking, swooning, sex-spooked maidens
ought we'd left behind in a darker age.
say this much, bizarrely, is to be tarred with
ide brush of conservatism, no matter how
l you fancy yourself to be. Academe has no
explanation for your failure to fear the great
sex god and to demand all possible protec-
against him. Daphne Patai, ten-year veter-
women's studies at the University of Mass-
etts at Amherst, finds herself vilified by her
l colleagues following the emergence of
ophobia. The well-known lesbian critic
e Marks finds herself "isolated in women's
s" and branded a "closet conservative" for

trying, however vainly, to temper her department's rhetoric of victimization.

Were the rhetoric of the sexual-harassment [illegible] pursued with any consistency, it would deepen the rift between *classes* and between *races* just as fast as it has, in effect, restored the rift between the sexes. For what is the main object of



university harassment discourse? "Power differential." Under no circumstances, we hear with metronomic regularity, may we countenance a "power differential" in intimate relationships. A teaching assistant not only *should* not but *cannot* [illegible] consent with an assistant professor, suggests Billie Dziech, spokesperson for the consensus of harassment experts in the *Duke Journal* [illegible] (1990). Elsewhere she reasons "for America's exacerbated confusion about 'consent,'" she explains patiently,

> [illegible] "Consent" is [illegible] a concept that [illegible] Submission [illegible] is [illegible] cannot [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

...ers that she can arouse the college dean ...ully as much as physically. He can confide in ...ore than he ever could in his yuppie kids and ...sh colleagues. She finds in the privileged, ...ducated septuagenarian her first playmate, ...st person she can tease and trust.

...gend has it that love is blind. And lust is ... Just sometimes, though, they are clairvoy... They take the glaze from our eyes. They ...st us to look through the odd, untannable ex... of our neighbors and detect a familiar soul, ... with which, to our surprise, we can com...cate. Indifference and industry have made ...men blinder than eros. If Cupid wears a blind... now and then, Mammon wears a hood.

...s not that anyone is clamoring for free-for-...ulty-student sex; no one except, perhaps, ...ssor Gallop, who—seizing her gender for a ...l—declares that "graduate students are [her] ...l preference" and seems to proposition as ... of them as she can. In the vast majority of ... erotic energy does better work when chan... and curtailed than spilled. In the vast ...rity of cases, students and teachers ...d *not* sleep with each other, if you ask ...Not for the reasons often cited—not ...se of power differentials and disillu... with authority and lifelong trauma, ...n occur no more or less in these than in ... relationships—but because it would ...quickly become dull and sap away too ... energy. When a student has a crush on ...cher, it is a powerful and productive ...: she or he works much harder, listens ...ore voraciously, appropriates, in many ... the teacher's intellectual enthusiasms ...student becomes a sponge for knowl... When a teacher has a weakness for even one ...nt in a lecture hall, the whole class benefits ...r he speaks with far greater care, switches ... autopilot to real-think mode, and (with ... even looks forward to reading papers.

...e of the least disputed objections to class... erotics is that they constitute, in the words ...assment author Leslie Pickering Francis, a ...raction from teaching, learning, and re...n." Nothing could be further from the truth. ...y that chemistry between a student and a ...er distracts from learning is like saying that ... distracts from seeing. It does not distract; it ...ns, enhances, intensifies—it fixes the gaze ...es teeth to the eyes, a digestive tract to the ...

...ll go out on a limb and admit that if crush... ...ween students and teachers could have ...prevented when I was in college, I would ... have made it through. The fact that I graid... ...summa cum laude is testimony to the num... crushes that sustained me, that kept me ... and eager, and engaged. At the beginnings of quarters I shopped around for teachers to have a crush on, and it was useful to me, long term, when I found none. I tried. I marked the time of minor lights—I know me full well—that it could not generate at least a little heat in my mind would freeze.

This used not to be as shocking a confession as it seems today. Passion and pedagogy were not always expected to keep such separate quarters. Read about the nineteenth-century American Transcendentalist Margaret Fuller and you will hear that her students—albeit female—loved her ardently and wrote her love letters. Socrates' students loved *him* ardently, and regularly attempted to seduce him. It is only in our own period—or especially, at least, in our own period—that teaching is required to be sterile before it can be viewed as respectable.

I do not advocate making a habit of sleeping with professors, but then I would not advocate making a habit of sleeping with plumbers, or re...

> *Negro students cannot be excused for shoddy performance* because *they are Negro. To do so makes more rigid and intolerable the pathology, injustices, and distinctions of racism. There can be no double standards in education, no easy alibi.*
>
> —**KENNETH B. CLARK** (1965)

altors, or artists either. I do advocate the exception. If a professor and student fall in love mutually—and let us admit that there are more occasions for this to occur than exist for a professor and a plumber—then there should not be a law or code or set of mores to stop them from giving that love an opportunity to succeed. It may not, as the new campus moralists observe, "the vast majority of students who enter into affairs with their lecturers . . . do not subsequently report that they were glad to have had the experience. Quite the contrary." Most relationships don't succeed—most *non*-faculty-student relationships don't succeed, if by success we mean that they go on forever. And when people come out of them, they unfortunately do not often "report that they were glad to have had the experience" either—at least not right afterward. Divorce courts are full of people who say the opposite. We do not, therefore, outlaw marriage.

The greatest learning experiences, for me, were almost always the greatest personal experiences. It is hard to know what [illegible]

interest in what was said or interest in the sayer. Does my passion for Renaissance love poetry come from my passion for the stubborn, fiery man who insisted on teaching it in a freshman composition class designed around "accessible" essays on abortion and multiculturalism? Or did my passion for him grow out of the poetry? At the risk of my not yet estab-



I AM A FIRM BELIEVER in the principle of universal, public, democratic education. I believe that publicly financed education from the nursery school through the highest levels of graduate and professional instruction is essential to American democracy as we know and value it. I have no sympathy whatever with anyone who proposes to cut school appropriations in such a way as to limit educational opportunity or to impair the quality of instruction. I believe in doing away with every barrier that race, religion or economic status interposes to prevent any American from pursuing to the highest levels any form of study for which he has the intellectual capacity, the desire and the will. I believe, finally, in academic freedom. I conceive it to be the scholar's duty to resist every effort to stifle the free and responsible investigation and discussion of public issues. And I stand ready to oppose to the uttermost any group that seeks to limit or pervert the curricula of schools and colleges in order to impose upon them their own narrow and dogmatic preconceptions concerning matters that are properly the subject of free inquiry.

The great issue today is not whether the American school system ought to be democratic—of course it ought. The issue is whether the school system ought to be *educational*. . . . [I]f the public-school system ceases to be educational, can it possibly avoid being antidemocratic as well? . . .

An increasing number of public-school administrators and educational theorists today refuse to define the purposes of the school in terms of intellectual training or of the recognized disciplines of science and scholarship. In my own state a publicly supported Illinois Secondary School Curriculum Program has circulated a series of questionnaires purporting to ask citizens, teachers and pupils what they "think is the job of the secondary school." History, mathematics, science and foreign languages are nowhere mentioned, hence no one is permitted to suggest that training in these fields might be even a part of "the job of the secondary school." Instead the school is supposed to be concerned with a pot-pourri of 55 "problems of high-school youth," in which "the problem of acquiring the social skills of dancing, playing party games, doing parlor stunts, etc." is given just as much emphasis as "the problem of acquiring the ability to study and help solve economic, social and political problems." The educators never tell how the school is going to give its students the latter . . . .

If the schools are indifferent to intellectual values, the only conclusion which the public can draw is that intellectual values are worth very little, and that the destruction of them—the suppression of freedom of thought, of speech, and of teaching—is the destruction of something expendable.

—**ARTHUR E. BESTOR JR.**
"Anti-Intellectualism in the Schools," The New Republic
(January 19, 1953)

lished reputation as a serious Renaissanc
thority, I would have to say: the former.
personal fascination came first: I love
teaching assistant before I loved Shakespe
worshiped the saint before the god. But w
ever the case, I am now a believer. I have
thirteen years to recant, and haven't. My i
est has only become deeper and more pr
like the faithful of any creed, I have f
more and more reasons to approve my ch
and revel in the unforeseen mysteries of n
ligion. It seems to me that the notion of
unhampered choice—in profession, area
specialization, or hobbies, for that matte
hollow. We grow interested in what we
ourselves to. Within the limits of our tem
ment and talent, we get a lot from the pu
to which we *give* a lot. And we give a lot t
causes that boast the best solicitor. Ther
exceptions, to be sure. But this is a rule.

I learned about more than Renaissance l
ture from the man I loved as a freshman. Co
to popular opinion, the relationship di
reinforce my student sense of inferiority; it
inated it. As much as I admired my teac
also found I could talk with him; I had some
to offer him that had nothing to do with th
clichés of youth and beauty. Or if it had
with them, then long live mixed motives, fo
certainly were not the most important or l
cause of our understanding—an understa
that has grown over the last decade and sp
a vivid and voluble literary correspondence
relationship enfranchised me intellectua
gave me a voice, and faith in it. And it di
even though, at the outset, it also drew me
the goofiest excesses of adolescent adorati
drew me to abandon my slot at a top univers
order to trek across the country to an ob
one, at which my teaching assistant had ju
cepted his first professorship. It prompted
fake an interest in that school's religious affili
while working a job as a live lingerie mode
shady local bar to pay my increased private-s
dues. It also led me to flee the lightest coff
vitation from my idol. It was not until I ret
home (my funds ran out; my talents as a t
were limited) that our conversations real
gan. But even this—the experience of toll
my heart, however on the surface, vainly—
good for me. It made the love poems I was
ing real, immediate, and practical. It was th
oratory component of the Amorous Theory
assimilating.

All is fair in love and war; people mus
their chances, and students are no excep
University students are not children, and
en are not children, though to hear harassme
ficers talk one would think so. They are als
desireless deadwood; they do not drift abou

Photograph courtesy University of Illinois

, on the basis of admittedly anecdotal evi-
. that this happens far more frequently than

nd why shouldn't it? At least since Socrates
e the Athenian agora, students have shown
rkable enterprise in ensnaring their teach-
Think of the handsome Greek, Alcibiades, in
's *Symposium*: "My eyes rain tears when I
' Socrates' teachings, he confesses to us. "I
known in my soul, or in my heart, or in
other part, that worst of pangs . . . the pang
ilosophy." Luckily for him, he fancies that
structor already returns his affections. In-
he predicts "a grand opportunity . . . for I had
nderful opinion of the attractions of my
h." Accordingly, "I sent away [my] atten-
," and "thought that when there was nobody
us, I should hear him speak the language
h lovers use. . . ." No luck. That day Socrates
ly "conversed as usual," forcing his admirer
vite him into a more conducive setting: the

challenged him to the palaestra; and
d closed with me. . . . I fancied that I might
at I must take stronger measures. . . . So I in-
ted him to sup with me . . . and when he
s late and that he had much better remain.
crept under his threadbare cloak . . . and
ere I lay the whole night. . . . And yet,
withstanding all. . . . O judges; for judges you
thing more happened; but in the morning
I arose as from the couch of a father. . . .

not that Socrates was averse to rela-
with students; it was merely that he was
heat: at the time, he was already sleep-
with another one, Agathon.

arassment specialists seem unable to be-
e that female students have the desire or
rprise of an Alcibiades. They do. And the
tion that they do not—albeit held, as it of-
is, by bedrock feminists—seems strangely
t. Why should Greek men have initiative
eros, and American women none? Why
ld contemporary coeds emerge from a ro-
tic encounter with a teacher—even, as a
book on the subject tells us, "the most
sensual' appearing"—with "devastation . . .
and intense" and "self-esteem" so shattered
mands "years of therapy and reconstruct-
' when nobody thinks for one moment that
g men like Alcibiades or Agathon sustain
rable wounds? It is only women's experi-
e that is assumed to be traumatic beyond

comprehension or repair. It is only women who are taken to be as frail and faltering as they are devoid of lust and luster. Sexism can be paternalistic as well as aggressive (historically, it no matter who's spreading it.

Can it still bear saying that female students and stupidity as their male counterparts, that they have as great a capacity for making mistakes people's, if necessary? They don't need to be pa- men did in the sixteenth century, carrying them over thresholds and proffering smelling salts during a storm. A bit of role-playing in gender relations is a pleasure—pretty nothings like flowers and gallantry can beautify life. But this is too much. It's bad for women, for men, and for the relations between them.

And it is bad for pedagogy. It's one thing to disarm a certain type of old-school professor who thought that his students' bodies (as well as their research and briefcase-toting services) were his ist speech and to counsel caution in the initiation

School has become the world religion of a modernized proletariat, and makes futile promises of salvation to the poor of the technological age. The nation-state has adopted it, drafting all citizens into a graded curriculum leading to sequential diplomas not unlike the initiation rituals and hieratic promotions of former times.

— IVAN ILLICH (1970)

of student-teacher relationships. But it is another to stamp out playful and affectionate discourse just because it carries a sexual innuendo and may even, on occasion, make us "uncomfortable." It dent relationships altogether. Knowledge is un- with teachers; the most engaged teachers respond of sexual "impropriety" between teachers and students—is eliminated is the campus on which pedagogy is eviscerated. It is the campus on which pedagogy is dead.

Is there a more quintessential pedagogic Socrates and his pupils? The erotic and it tual attractions between them fed, inform

contended with each other. To be sure, Socrates probably hurt some of his "young men," and they him. But was he a superior companion to non-students? Did he interact more sublimely with his lawfully wedded wife, Xantippe? If so, it doesn't come out in the *Dialogues*, in which she is dismissed as a shrew. One can't legislate against pain or against mistakes. In a time and place in which half of all marriages end in separation, can we really prohibit any love at all simply because it *might* end ill?

It is a part of our safety-obsessed culture that we try. In a country where we give children crash helmets with their tricycles (and kneepads with their strollers), perhaps it is no wonder that we

> ***Education is a state responsibility which the legislature is good enough to let local smucks carry out so there will be someone to blame when things go wrong, as expected, between elections.***
>
> —**WILLARD D. CALLENDAR (1991)**

give them *The Lecherous Professor* with their college admissions. Perhaps it is no surprise that we lament, with Leslie Pickering Francis, the possibility that they may not prove "rational consumers of romantic relationships in the way they might be rational consumers of products"; and that we consequently forbid them any romance with a teacher in which they are, to quote David Archard, another expert, "unlikely to be able to determine, for instance, how long it lasts"—as though one were *ever* able to "determine" how long a relationship lasts; as though lovers were supposed to be "rational consumers." Love is not *commerce*; a relationship is not a safety-tested Tonka toy—and any attempt to make it such is bound to be catastrophic. It leads, among other things, to the bizarre situation of our contemporary American society, in which we are in principle forbidden to have relationships not *merely* with our students (if we are teachers) and our teachers (if we are students) but also with our doctors, lawyers, counselors, therapists, deans, co-workers, clients, employees, or employers—virtually anyone, in fact, with whom we might come into natural contact in the course of everyday life. The result? We find ourselves driven in numbers to dating services and singles clubs, where we spend large amounts of money to meet normal people in abnormal and usually highly stressful contexts. We join volunteer organizations that feel like meat markets, as a majority of members look out more vigilantly for the available b elor than for the nominal cause of the day. ficial contexts provoke artificial behavior make ill-informed and hasty choices—datin ter all, is such a chore this way—and end u marriages from which we soon ache to escap this is an overstatement, it is less of one those we hear regularly from the sexual-ha ment police.

Love comes in all shapes and colors and texts, and, in the end, the attempt to regulate injury-proof ultimately only cripples it and is an irony that even while university bur crats are doing their worst to banish "power balanced" relationships on campus, imagina writers are representing such relations with increasing frequency and eloque Indeed, if the 1980s and early '90s saw renaissance of the "campus novel" v David Lodge, the first two years of this tury have seen the rise of a genre still n specific, one we could reasonably call "campus *sexual-harassment* novel," wh foregrounds teacher-student (or teac staff) relationships. Alongside Roth's *Dying Animal* and *The Human Stain* we h Francine Prose's *Blue Angel*, J. M. Coetz *Disgrace*, Tim O'Brien's *Tomcat in L* John L'Heureux's *Handmaid of Des* Charles Baxter's *The Feast of Love*, and D Lodge's own *Thinks . . .*, to name only a hand The couplings in these novels, as in life, are so times worse than others, and sometimes bet there are opportunistic ones like that in Pro incisive *Blue Angel*, and there are unexpecte strong, almost noble ones such as that in Ro *Human Stain*. None, though, can be forbid without violence to the human soul.

Should we have forbidden Camille Clau and Rodin? Hannah Arendt and Martin H degger? Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rimba Allan Bloom and his student lovers? Profes bell hooks and her student boyfriend? Hélo and Abelard? To be sure, not one of these re tionships, each initially pedagogic, was perf (which is?), but all were spectacularly prod tive, revelatory, heated, and formative for b parties—in several cases, formative for We ern culture and philosophy. The most beau ful and authentic and complex love poem know were written by a teacher to his stude They were written by John Donne, in the ea seventeenth century, to his employer's nie with whom he eloped, and for whom he s fered loss of reputation, money, and career the next quarter century. Not long aft Donne penned these poems, John Milton whose marriage sustained no similar power d ferential—drafted "The Doctrine and Dis pline of Divorce."

THE TENTH MUSE

Who is Demotica, what is she?

By Jacques Barzun

She is the muse of popular culture, the tenth muse, the muse who inspires the poems and tales and tunes that express the hearts and minds of the people. Reliable reports say that she has disappeared, and this worries a good many observers. Their concerns point in various directions, but together they confirm the impression that in the modern world there is no popular culture. Listen to some of these complaints. The *New York Times* says that the whole country argues about taste and concludes that "when it comes to enforcing it, it's best to tread lightly, if at all." A book by Thomas S. Hibbs entitled *Shows About Nothing* has the subtitle "Nihilism in Popular Culture from The Exorcist to Seinfeld." Another, *Crowd Culture*, by Bernard J. Bell, points out that although the culture that offers "escape . . . into a dream world of carnality and brutality" is conspicuous, it is far from being acceptable as culture at all. The columnist Leonard Pitts deplores the "insidious" message that gangsta rap sends to the young. "You struggle to make [black youth] hear you over the beat of a song" that rewards death by drugs and gunshot, but it is difficult. On a broader plane, Joseph P. Lawrence asks "What Is Culture?" in order to discuss whether popular culture is the contradiction of high culture or its foundation. To decide, one must first make sure which of innumerable things that flourish under the name is *the* popular culture of the times.

The issue is not confined to the United States. In England the director of the Barbican Arts Centre in London sees a dangerous conflict: "Populism versus Elitism in the Arts," which is something new and alarming because of its effect on where the money for art goes. To save themselves, the high arts must engage in "outreach" and "educating" the public. Meanwhile, the warden of Goldsmiths College wonders "Should the Arts Be Popular?" He means, Should the distinction be erased by a merger of styles and genres?

In France the same topic has received attention, but the only extended treatment, in Mona Ozouf's book *La Muse démocratique*, treats the popular with disdain and invokes the works of Henry James as a shield against "the gray, dull, and vulgar world." His novels serve this purpose because they show up and condemn vulgarity while steadfastly upholding the true democratic ideal.

Ozouf's sheer avoidance could be labeled sheer elitism, but it also suggests the absence in the popular genres of those qualities that in the past "elitist" minds enjoyed and respected. If, to return to this country, one goes to the *Journal of Popular Culture*, one is likewise disappointed to find it silent on its declared subject. It deals with such topics as "Fairy Tale Elements in *Jane Eyre*," H. L. Mencken and Methodism, and Sir Thomas Browne's *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*. That Georges Simenon's Maigret novels and Maurice Sendak's books for children are also discussed does not conceal the remoteness of all such considerations from the reality on the streets.

Let us take a quick look at the popular. In music, it includes cowboy and country, rock and rap, and other offshoots of early-twentieth-century ragtime and jazz. These have subdivided endlessly, each with a special name, fine-

Jacques Barzun, a frequent contributor to Harper's Magazine, is the author of 30 books, including *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life* (HarperCollins).

drawn characteristics, and clannish devotees. In storytelling, the popular ranges from tough crime to pornography; in graphics, from the comic strip to pop art; and in magazines, from the supermarket level to the group-interest form that rises out of bodybuilding and housekeeping to the dizzy literary heights of *The New Yorker* and *The Paris Review*. The television screen features soap operas, legal or other dramatic episodes, and moneyed competitions, while the Internet offers games and pseudo culture—a congeries of pastimes that, with some overlapping, cater to diverse publics. The newspapers record the diversity in review articles by different experts.

Can it be said that any of these entertainments expresses the hearts and minds of the



people? Some think that rap lyrics echo a prevailing disgust with life and society at the end of an era. Sentimental balladry under various names depicts the world that simple souls desire but nobody believes in. And even these two extremes of feeling might qualify as popular culture if they sounded more spontaneous, less like standardized products modified only to compete within an industry.

Clearly, in the modern demotic society there is no art of and by the people. True, the many new immigrant groups in Western nations cling to their folk songs and dances, bu cannot expect original departures spread of innovations from on nic enclave to another.

That a popular culture can expre people as a whole is not a fanciful idea; been done. The Athenian population, br up on Homer, flocked to the Greek drama illiterate medievals listened to the tale of wulf (recently resuscitated by an Irish po the *Nibelungenlied*, to the stories of Trista Parsifal and the Nordic sagas, while they also "read" the Bible in the stained gla sculpture of their churches. Next, the R sance created the superb Spanish ballads inspired Spanish poets down to Lorca, the lish and Scottish border b and a vast collection of songs and tales. It develope modern form of the play, mixed crowd filled Shakesp Globe Theatre. Rabelais Cervantes wrote bestsellers. age cultivated domestic and made abundant us church and at home of the art of painting in perspec From far back, then, popul meant the people's recogn of their life and soul in their

But have I not omitted modern equivalent, the mo I kept them out of the list the thought that they m prove the one genre of ecum cal appeal. Hollywood f reach all parts of the country deed travel to the ends of earth, and thus seem to exp all humankind. But that is a lusion. A large part of the ou expresses chiefly the "carn and brutality" that many ob to; the ratings system to pro the young makes it plain "the people" do not see t hopes and fears mirrored on screen. A segment of the public avoids the and mayhem and looks for the sophistic work of the artist-producer, native or fore Since, we are told, a commercial film must at the mind of the thirteen-year-old, the fai to produce films for adults endowed with c mon sense about what matters to them is populism. They patronize the movies and tc ate, often with disgust, the routine offering, they are in fact undernourished by it, and t best selves remain unexpressed.

What takes some explaining is why the o

y people of Athens could appreciate Sopho-
Antigone, medieval peasants the tale of
nhauser, and sixteenth-century Londoners
pointedly named *As You Like It*, when these
ks and their like are now deemed too diffi-
to appeal to the common taste. The error is
the language alone, which can be explained or
dermined. It is the lack of certain mental and
otional habits. Not only has a verbal and oral
lition been broken but a mental power has
n lost: the capacity, developed from im-
cy by myths and other domestic lore, to
oy things that are beyond the fully un-
stood. In Athens not everybody could
ge the sublime in the tragedies, but all
d something to be moved by and to re-
mber. This possessive curiosity seems
wadays in abeyance. Culture, in the
se of all things of the mind, has been
it, first in half, and then the lower half
into bits and pieces at once
obvious and obsessive.

The first writer to deal seriously with
s division used the then recently
ned terms "lowbrow" and "highbrow." In
America's Coming-of-Age, published in 1915,
critic of New England literature Van
ck Brooks ascribed the split to the Puritan
gma that the Deity directs with equal con-
n the moral and the practical success of
nkind. This belief, according to Brooks,
es equal value to cultural effort and to self-
opportunism—the low cunning of business,
e identification of worth with money.
Drinking back from this materialism, said
Books, the first American geniuses in art and
ought—Emerson and his peers—made cult
te "fastidious, refined, and aloof." Hence the
lvision into high and low.

The fact is clear but the explanation had to
cept. No Puritan tradition swayed continen-
Europe, yet the same separation came about
ere. Nor can one see how the Almighty
uld do other than oversee all the doings of
manity, moral and material. Brooks's view
s but one form of the anti-bourgeois, anti-
itan animus current early in the century.

A more tenable origin of the unequal brows
the physical uprooting that occurred in late-
ghteenth-century society—first, of those who
me to people this country and who faced the
k of building it from the ground up. This ef-
t and its continual westward movement in-
fered with the handing down of old tradi-
ns, which did not fit the immigrants' new
perience. The generations born here inter-
rried, wanted to be Americans, and spoke
Eglish, not the language of their folktales. For
popular culture to thrive, it must be part of a
continuous fabric of ideas and feelings from low
to high, each level inspiring and borrowing
from the next. The continuity enables the un-
educated to find ports of entry into high art
and encourages the geniuses to make use of
popular creation in their respective spheres.

A different uprooting "brainwashed" the Eu-
ropeans who stayed home. Its cause: the Indus-
trial Revolution and the cities it produced.
Factory and slum put an end to the rural plen-

We need to reject the ill-founded notions that every child learns naturally at his or her own pace and that teaching the child is more important than teaching the subject (whatever that means, beyond failure to teach the subject).

—**E. D. HIRSCH** (1996)

sures of the people. The tumult of the city, of
many cities with shifting populations, de-
stroyed reflection in idle hours and bred bad ar-
tists. It is pertinent that jazz—the one wholly
American form of music, came out of a segre-
gated group in New Orleans, a town free of in-
dustry. Later, it was again the South that pro-
duced poets and novelists who for their
materials and outlook drew on the rustic past
and called themselves Agrarians. The record
the country responded to the insights of vary-
ing depth embodied in the world of Faulkner or
in *Gone with the Wind*.

If the question were put abruptly, Does the
machine lower the mind? one would have to
answer yes and no. In direct contact, it tires
the eyes, shatters the wits, and by multi-
plying human relations it has a civilizing effect
that we call sophistication. But a contrary ef-
fect accompanies the broadened outlook. The
machine's multiplying power turns out goods in
huge quantities and demands masses of con-
sumers. To please them all, products must sat-
isfy the most elementary taste—or so those who
make them believe, rightly or wrongly. The net
result is the low-common-required: when a tele-
vision show pleases 12 million viewers, one that
pleases only 6 million is a failure. It rings the
curtain down, and the upshot: 6 million de-
prived and their taste debased. The runny flavor
of mass-produced entertainment is the out-
come of this numerical compulsion.

For a true culture to arise and survive, a
common core of ideas and feelings must exist.
The arts I am in—the people

beyond the immediate audience. Hence the [illegible] pop culture. The ballad of Chevy Chase shows a finer sense of words and rhythm than gangsta rap, and its pathos trains the emotions to a finer sensibility.

Seeing the political danger from industrial barbarism, thinkers and lawgivers in the mid-nineteenth century decreed free education for all to create political responsibility and also to extend economic opportunity. In this effort the United States took the lead. It established primary schools that assimilated the great tide of immigrants, and, what is most remarkable,

Rarely is the question asked: Is our children learning?

— **GEORGE W. BUSH** (2000)

by 1900 the American free public high school, compulsory for all, was providing a secondary education that embraced the cultural heritage. As late as the 1920s and '30s, a high-school senior had had three years of Latin and was parsing Virgil, had read some Dickens, Scott, Hawthorne, and George Eliot, and was being taken through Milton's shorter poems by a teacher who knew how to make them clear and moving. In the Oak Park High School that Ernest Hemingway attended, there was a Latin Club with a room specially assigned to it, where the students talked to one another in Latin.

I cite this as indicative of the lengths to which it was once possible to go. So cruel a discipline today would cause an outcry, and it is not needed for a popular culture. But something like it is called for. The early and mid-twentieth century devised various means to supply it. Night schools for adults, and the Carnegie and other educational foundations, special periodicals, book clubs, libraries, innumerable series of classics in cheap but good hardcover editions—these, together with the new nationwide radio, seconded the work of the high school. As for the colleges and universities, they uniformly maintained a curriculum with liberal-arts requirements. The academic and intellectual elites were bent on giving everybody a chance to reconnect with the heritage.

Among the persons engaged in this crusade, the great hero was the late Clifton Fadiman. Every aspect of his career and achievement illustrates the vicissitudes of the endeavor first proposed by Matthew Arnold under the heading *Culture and Anarchy*. Arnold's aim w[illegible] civilize the philistines and barbarians of [illegible] land by making "the best that has [illegible] thought and known in the world current e[illegible] where," affording not only enjoyment but [illegible] an upward mobility in taste.

Fadiman's dedication to this task was no[illegible] inspiration of youth but a mature seci[illegible] choice. As a senior at Columbia Colleg[illegible] 1925, Clifton ("Kip" to his classmates) wa[illegible] acknowledged intellectual leader of his c[illegible] the model scholar and writer. Every issue o[illegible] literary magazine *Morningside* contained on[illegible] more of his poems—often a sonnet—or a[illegible] say, a fragment of philosophy transl[illegible] from the French, or an imaginary scen[illegible] tween figures in a tragedy by Sopho[illegible] The poetry was Georgian in style [illegible] sometimes down to earth like Edgar [illegible] Masters's narratives. Nobody could d[illegible] that Fadiman would soon become a r[illegible] in contemporary letters. The expecta[illegible] was confirmed when the Modern Lil[illegible] commissioned him to translate and introdu[illegible] volume of works by Nietzsche.

With an academic record that matched [illegible] extracurricular performance, he had good[illegible] son to expect what he most desired: an ac[illegible] mic career. His college instructors had enc[illegible] aged this ambition, notably John Erskine, [illegible] famed as a scholar and novelist and the fa[illegible] of the Great Books program. But when in g[illegible] uate school Fadiman was interviewed by [illegible] head of the English department, he was [illegible] with blunt kindness that he could not hop[illegible] a post at Columbia: he was Jewish. This ex[illegible] sionary custom was not limited to that dep[illegible] ment. All but two or three observed a tacit [illegible] that was broken only in the late thirties w[illegible] President Nicholas Murray Butler forced [illegible] tenure appointment of Lionel Trilling.

Facing a blank wall, Fadiman turned to l[illegible] ary journalism. He became a reviewer for [illegible] *Nation*, like Mark Van Doren, who, tho[illegible] newly made assistant professor, was a little [illegible] pect as a scholar because of this venture [illegible] the marketplace. Fadiman reviewed books [illegible] *The Nation* for seven years, and so acutely [illegible] attractively that *The New Yorker* recruited [illegible] as its chief critic. He occupied the post fo[illegible] decade before Edmund Wilson. Concurrer[illegible] Fadiman was acting as reader—and soon as [illegible] to in chief—for Simon & Schuster, thus s[illegible] ng literature like George Meredith and T[illegible] Eliot while contributing to it.

As a seasoned judge of books, Fadiman [illegible] next taken on by the Book-of-the-Mo[illegible] Club. Its mission was to distribute new book[illegible] high merit to a wider public than was reac[illegible] by the antique methods of trade publish[illegible]

new club meant to offer more solid works
those supplied by the Literary Guild. It is
its point—the year was 1944—that Clifton
man began to be condescended to by aca-
ics and the literati. He was deemed to have
down one level in the cultural hierarchy
sured by height of brow.

his notion of brow levels requires explana-
. Paradoxically, it was ushered in by the
ess of free public schooling. Enlarged liter-
fostered the mass newspaper. Artists and
llectuals were appalled at its tone and con-
s and united to condemn the type of mind
reated, again by lowest appeal. Baudelaire
d it Satanic. Contempt followed hatred
a radical difference in human minds was
pted as a fact of nature; the code words
brow" and "highbrow" have been traced as
ack as 1906. One's choices in books and
ares, hobbies and employment, showed to
ch division of mankind one belonged. Any-
g popular meant low; popular culture was
ned a contradiction in terms. As time went
the distance between the poles kept in-
sing until art and "journalism" were worlds
t.

he caste system held in spite of disputes
ut particulars (Dickens was a great ge-
—No! he was "a writer for chamber-
ds," etc.). Arguing about such double-
gued classics suggested that perhaps the
m between the high and the low was in-
ted; a large contingent thrived there un-
hed: the middle brow. The astute observer
ell Lynes mapped the three zones of mind
n entertaining essay published in *Harper's*
gazine in 1949. By Lynes's reckoning,
on Fadiman, the respected critic and once
ified highbrow, was déclassé. While he
ued his chosen task, a writer for *Partisan*
ew, whose name is now obscure and who
left no work of any moment, wrote an es-
entitled "Masscult and Midcult" and
ded Fadiman "the standard bearer of mid-
row culture."

he inferior status assigned to Fadiman in
career sank even further when he became
ost of *Information, Please*. This was a radio
program of the simple kind, without mon-
rizes, which sparked a conversation among
a dozen notables who indulged in witty di-
sions. Like the later *Conversation*, which
ssed current books and in which Fadiman
took part, this program entertained, ob-
ng the fact that it was manned by high-
's and widely enjoyed by that same breed.
popularity was the fatal stain.

opularity, though, is a relative term. A lit-
fter *Information, Please* came *Invitation to*
oning, of which I was the moderator for two
years. It brought together knowledgeable people as different from one another as Rex Stout and Bertrand Russell, who debated the message of a work by Tocqueville or Walt Whitman or some other classic author. The program was protected by William Paley, head of CBS, who kept it alive in spite of its reaching only 2 million listeners when "success" called for 10.

These not-at-all-learned broadcasts somehow escaped censure by the friends of intellectual purity, but other, comparable ventures aimed at large audiences were finally outlawed, at least in words. When, for example, Time-Life Records in the 1960s offered a series of LP albums anthologizing Western music since the sixteenth century accompanied by well-written commentary (which I was given the task of editing), various academics condemned the set because all the discs were from one company and thus not the best recorded performance of each work—as if these carpers would ever have agreed on the best.

The highbrow guardians failed to understand how the things they cherished depend on stirrings down below. A chance encounter with a novel, a symphony, a painting, will impel a young mind to go on—and up. High-



OUR NATION IS AT RISK. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world. This report is concerned with only one of the many causes and dimensions of the problem, but it is the one that undergirds American prosperity, security, and civility. We report to the American people that while we can take justifiable pride in what our schools and colleges have historically accomplished and contributed to the United States and the well-being of its people, the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur—others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments.

If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. We have even squandered the gains in achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge. Moreover, we have dismantled essential support systems which helped make those gains possible. We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament.

—THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION
A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform
(1983)

brows are self-made, and even before reaching that glorious state, one possessed by cultural passion may produce original work. The creative geniuses are not invariably cultivated minds. But they must at some point have felt the power of the real thing, no matter how simple. All Burns and Lorca needed were the popular ballads of their country. Others, more fully self-educated, become the apprec listeners they need.

Here again, Clifton Fadiman's odyssey evant. He was the son of unpretentious p who lived modestly—at times precariousl Brooklyn. Both Kip and his older brothe win, early showed a lust for learning tha local Boys' High School nourished by the of curriculum described above. Edwin, the to attend Columbia College, did well there shared what he acquired. He would "assign course readings to Kip, so that when younger brother entered the college as a f man aged sixteen he already had a comma English and American literature and a re knowledge of French and German. No wo that when I met him two years later, he pressed me and others of us as the bearer Western culture since the Greeks.

Being so young, he often felt scared (as h er confided), but most of the time he was l ant, full of humor, fond of puns—anything pedantic or solemnly learned, though he c be impatient and abrupt with the slow-w when they were stubborn. He rejoiced in vast the universe of learning was; he read the speed of light and retained all that he set eyes on or heard. Such is the typical ta the social history of civilization. The makers carriers of art and thought come from now in particular; they are suddenly there. No s class, no "method," turns them out like r ketable goods; but a fund of culture, plai subtle, simple or complex, must exist, aliv human beings, to attract and pel other individuals.

While Fadiman was giving some of time to radio programs, he was also pursu his Arnoldian mission, writing essays al books and ideas that now fill half a dozen umes. His introductions to classic and cont porary works number nearly fifty, som which, like the one to *Pickwick Papers*, small masterpieces. The anthologies he c piled number fifteen and range from the sto of O. Henry to those of Henry James. One er, *An American Treasury*, which brings tog er utterances of every kind about America f colonial times to the present, is a highly or nal sourcebook. Fadiman also kept the v young in mind. He selected a dozen or m readings with comments for the use of c dren, his expertise confirmed by his mast monograph on the history of children's lit ture in the fourteenth edition of the *En clopaedia Britannica*. And for readers wit mathematical turn of mind, he gathered t collections of articles, short stories, and poe that display the curiosities of numbers.



As [the twentieth] century drew to a close, American schools were once again at the center of acrimonious debates about their quality, their methods, and even their purpose. The schools were expected to do something they had never done before: educate all children to high standards. . . .

Critics pointed to low scores on national and international tests; to the widespread practice of social promotion and grade inflation; to the large numbers of teachers who had received degrees in pedagogy, but not in the academic subjects they were teaching; to the high rates of remediation necessary in college; and to the low academic expectations that had become ingrained in many American schools. School districts in different parts of the country were rocked by disputes about the curriculum, standards of achievement, and classroom methods. Bitter debates broke out about how to teach reading and mathematics, how much emphasis to place on multiculturalism in history and literature, how to measure students' performance, and whether to hold students accountable for their work in school and teachers accountable for their pupils' progress.

Though American educators, parents, and policy makers living through these disputes in the 1980s and 1990s doubtless thought they were pioneers, in fact these issues have a long history. They have been debated for the past century. The great educational issues of the twentieth century in the United States centered on the questions of who was to be educated and what they were to learn. What are schools for and what should they aim to do? What is it that schools must do? As the stakes attached to education grew higher, parents' anxiety about their children's schooling grew as well; as the cost of education escalated, public officials insisted on surer evidence that the schools were succeeding in their most important tasks. . . .

Today, as the schools compete for children's time and attention with television, movies, the Internet, and other mass media, those who run them must know what schools alone can do. The schools must reassert their primary responsibility for the development of young people's intelligence and character. . . . If youngsters are set free from serious studies, unencumbered by the significant ideas and controversies of American and world history, untouched by the great poets and novelists of the world, unaware of the workings of science, they will turn to other sources for information and stimulation. Children today swim in a sea of images shaped by the popular culture, electronic media, and commercial advertising. Everything becomes trivia, everything is packaged to fit the terms of celebrity and sensationalism, famous for a minute or two, then gone.

—DIANE RAVITCH
Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms
(2000)

hat is sad to look back on is that Kip
ted for himself the judgment passed on
by the highbrows. It was not explicit but
ospheric. In conversation with close
ds, literary or academic, who esteemed
highly, his one irritating trait was the re-
nt depreciation of his work and his mind:
course I am not qualified like you to speak
ne subject," or, "I am only a rank amateur
ese things," when in fact he knew more on
opic than any of his listeners. He was not
ned but thought that he ought to be. It is
ar-fetched to say that feeling obliged to
ow *height* is now a national habit. For ex-
le, *Time* magazine assures us that "high
" isn't highbrow. In fact, it's everywhere, for
yone, in everything from can openers to
racks to cars." (March 20, 2000) In vain
Arnold point out that "the social idea and
men of culture are the true apostles of
lity."

he printed word did not monopolize Fadi-
's multiform energies. He lectured on hu-
istic topics at colleges and universities, was
g reporter for the Metropolitan Opera
intermission speaker for the Boston
hony. As consultant on the human-
for the Ford Foundation's Fund for
Advancement of Education and a
ee of the Council for Basic Education,
nan contributed to the "Back to Ba-
reform of the schools. Robert Maynard
hins, when president of the Univer-
of Chicago, recognized the caliber and
rience of the man when he appointed
to the editorial board of the *Ency-
edia Britannica*. Fadiman served it as
r and editor for twenty years. His de-
on to the life of the mind persisted un-
s death at ninety-five. Although blind
rd the end, he continued to "read" by
otape six books a month for the Book-
e-Month Club, while he co-edited a
ve anthology of world poetry in Eng-
ranslation.

is clear that if the hundredth part of
noble work had been done from some
us or other, Clifton Fadiman would
been regarded as a scholar and a
er of the highest attainable brow. But
her, his lectures amounted to courses
his essays to scholarly criticism. The la-
f it all was not entirely overlooked. He
ved several prizes, culminating in the
National Book Award for Distin-
ed Contribution to American Let-
His obituaries were full of respect, but
tenor was that of one of the head-
"An Erudite Guide to the Wisdom of
rs." The judgment not only ignores
the wisdom needed for unerring guidance; it perpetuates a false view of culture and how it is kept alive.

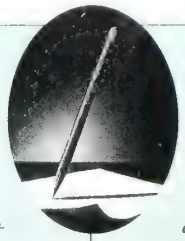
Right now, working to that end is out of the question. Those who still think that *something* ought to be imparted to the next generation are struggling to rescue the public schools. It is a national goal, a presidential priority, but achieving it is hindered by many things, of which one is the absence of a popular culture. For such a culture by definition lives both in the world and in the home, where it provides the young with a springboard into what is taught in school. Today, all agree that for a majority of children the gap between the domestic and the school mind is unbridgeable.

If the efforts to restore the effectiveness of the public school succeed, the battle will then be joined with the ruling caste in higher education, which is busy destroying the heritage of the Western world by teaching the young to find ugly motives behind its creation.

Meantime, a miscellaneous public rejoices in the thought that the Internet "puts the



whole world of knowledge at your fingertips." A fair number of fingertips itch for that wealth and are gratified with information at low cost, even with misinformation. But the lust for knowing creates less demand in the digital bazaar than games and porn, while the available "art shows" arouse less envy than the noted dilettante's collection of bottle tops from 159 countries. In any case, "the world of knowledge" is not something in a warehouse. Knowledge lives by being known, not [illegible]. Like religion, like a popular culture, possession held in common as widely as [illegible] ble. No layer of culture exists on that sc[illegible] day and nobody is preaching a revival [illegible] mid-century crusade. As things stand, [illegible] as it should be: first things first. We sh[illegible] fortunate if all the earnest agitation [illegible] back to the people a common possess [illegible] the three R's.



1895

On April 13, 1895, these and thirty-six other "Examination Graduation Questions" were read to eighth graders in Saline County, Kansas. Answers were given in writing, and quality of penmanship counted toward one's final score. Those who failed were not permitted to graduate.

GRAMMAR

1. Give nine rules for the use of Capital Letters.
3. Define Verse, Stanza and Paragraph.
7–10. Write a composition of about 150 words and show therein that you understand the practical use of the rules of grammar.

ARITHMETIC

1. Name and define the Fundamental Rules of Arithmetic.
3. If a load of wheat weighs 3942 lbs., what is it worth at 50 cts. per bu., deducting 1050 lbs. for tare?
4. District No. 33 has a valuation of $35,000. What is the necessary levy to carry on a school seven months at $50 per month, and have $104 for incidentals?

U.S. HISTORY

1. Give the epochs into which U.S. History is divided.
3. Relate the causes and results of the Revolutionary War.
8. Name events connected with the following dates: 1607, 1620, 1800, 1849, and 1865.

ORTHOGRAPHY

1. What is meant by the following: Alphabet, phonetic orthography, etymology, syllabication?
3. What are the following, and give examples of each: Trigraph, subvocals, diphthong, cognate letters, linguals?
10. Write 10 words frequently mispronounced and indicate pronunciation by use of diacritical marks and by syllabication.

GEOGRAPHY

1. What is climate? Upon what does climate depend?
3. Of what use are rivers? Of what use is the ocean?
5. Name and describe the following: Monrovia, Odessa, Denver, Manitoba, Hecla, Yukon, St. Helena, Juan Fernandez, Aspinwall, and Orinoco.

2000

Herewith, President Bush's cure for "the soft bigotry of low e[illegible] pectations." These questions and 224 others like them appear[illegible] on last year's eighth-grade Texas Assessment of Academic Ski[illegible] exam, the model for the new state and national standardized tes[illegible] that Bush has proposed.

WRITING

Read the passage and choose the word or group of words that b[illegible] longs in each space. Mark the letter for your answer.

There is nothing like spring in Texas. Wildflowers _____ plain fields of grass into oceans of blue, pink, and yellow.

F was transforming
G transform
H transforms
J has transformed

MATH

Tyrone bought a cherry pie for $5.99, a box of doughnu[illegible] holes for $1.98, and 7 doughnuts for $3.43. How much wa[illegible] his total purchase before tax?

F $9.40
G $10.30
H $10.40
J $11.30
K $11.40

SOCIAL STUDIES

Read each question and choose the best answer. Then mark the let[illegible] ter for the answer you have chosen.

Which of the following events occurred last?

A George Washington was elected President.
B The Civil War was fought.
C The thirteen colonies were settled.
D The American Revolution was fought.

SCIENCE

Read each question and choose the best answer. Then fill in th[illegible] correct answer on your answer document.

Which of these is alive?

A A rock
B A fish
C A star
D A pencil

Photograph © Shooting Star/Ph[illegible]

EW BOOKS

Guy Davenport



he Danish island of the Fyn (thatched villages, austere white churches, wild pomes) tionally sends its bright teenagers Copenhagen. The composer Carl sen got to the city in 1884, at the of nineteen, immediately stopping iceman to ask where it was they you to play the fiddle. Hans Chris- Andersen arrived in 1819, four- years old, stagestruck, aspiring to n actor, ballet dancer, playwright, , singer, and novelist. His educa- up to that point had been so rudi- tary that a kindly patron enrolled in grammar school. In HANS RISTIAN ANDERSEN: THE LIFE A STORYTELLER (Knopf, $30), ie Wullschlager, arts correspon- for the *Financial Times*, says that dersen could have sur- d only in Denmark, re hospitality is a com- dment of the Lord. ndersen began as a trav- riter and remains a mas- f that genre. His whim- l mind became his emark from the first ls of his the world saw: *eise fra Holmens Canal tpynten af Amager* ("Walking Tour Holmen's Canal to the Eastern of Amager")—today about a twen- inute walk from where Niels Bohr born to where Vilhelm Hammer- painted his incomparable interiors. ndersen wrote six novels. But not l he began to write *eventyr* (tales, entures") did the world sit bolt up- and take notice. They were a new of folklore, as meaningful to adults children. "The Emperor's New hes" is as applicable and pointed y as when Andersen's ink was still on the page. Yet, as Wullschlager pains to show, there are no good slations into English of any of the . London publishers had them translated from German, altering them according to Victorian pruderies and continuing German mistranslations. Indeed, Andersen is so idiomatic and wrote such countrified Danish that right now the Danes are rewriting him for schools and nurseries, Danish having changed far more since the nineteenth century than English.



Wullschlager's is a fine biography, careful, thorough, and a pleasure to read. It is also, in a wonderful way, *by* Andersen, who never let people forget that he overcame poverty, a lack of education, and personal ungainliness to dine with kings. This is the first biography of Andersen to admit that he fell in love with men as often as with women, rejected by both.

The twentieth century's teller of tales in English was an Oxford philologist and eminent scholar in Old and Middle English, J.R.R. Tolkien, whose *Hobbit* (1937) and its sequel, *The Lord of the Rings*, have sold millions of copies. These two unclassifiable narratives—imitation folktales? the Renaissance heroic epic resurrected?—fulfilled a hunger for the marvelous. Students not up to *The Faerie Queene* or the *Morte D'Arthur* responded with wild enthusiasm to Tolkien. Professor Tom Shippey, once Tolkien's colleague and now a professor at Saint Louis University, analyzes the reason why in his J.R.R. TOLKIEN: AUTHOR OF THE CENTURY (Houghton Mifflin, $26). Shippey feels hampered by the critical snobbery and softly coughing condescension that has surrounded Tolkien's reputation from the beginning. (Edmund Wilson called *The Lord of the Rings* "balderdash," and various other arbiters of fashion denounced an interest in Tolkien as puerile, senile, or just silly.)

Tolkien's imagination, Shippey shows, was basically linguistic. A culture is its language. European literature sinks back in time to remote and misty beginnings. On clay tablets in Proto-Greek we find the word "*teanas sai*," spelled with the abandoned letter digamma, our first evidence of "the lady and her daughter"—Demeter and Persephone. This tablet is a good thousand years older than Homer. Tolkien at a turning point in his career found ancient Greek too logical and neat. He fell in love instead with the runes of the North, the almost indecipherable prehistory of Denmark and Finland, a time of chain-mailed nobility and a belief in dragons. He made an imaginary past and place, Middle Earth, in which to revive the old tales, the old ways, the ancient words that survive in English fair play, honor, and decency.

When, fifty years ago, I attended Tolkien's lectures, I realized that I was absolutely ignorant of the Far North, its Wagnerian gods and heroes. Tolkien lectured to the [illegible] had a speech impediment, and was all too often given to wandering off into Welsh cognates. *The Lord of the Rings* was, for me, a redeeming gift for having learned the principal parts of Anglo-Saxon verbs, fifty every Friday. Further redemption came when I met, here in Kentucky, a classmate of Tolkien's who told me about good old Ronald

("whatever became of him?") was

Professor Shippey's commentary is the best so far in elucidating Tolkien's lovely myth (noting, astutely, that its whether to ideologies or narcotics). He is learned but blind to Ariosto, Boiardo, Tasso, and Luigi Pulci, whose narrative structures provided Tolkien with his intricately woven plotlines. One wonders, too, about Tolkien's being "the author of the century," in the popular sense. I celebrate Shippey's attention the work while asking that Tolkien stand beside such humbler mythmakers as Edgar Rice Burroughs and Georges Simenon.

Both Tolkien and Andersen would have balked at being labeled surrealists, which, in historical perspective, they most certainly were. If realism is a mirror, surrealism is, as one of its exemplars said, "through the looking glass." We are all surrealists when we dream, daydream, or tell children lies. Historians of the art in our time will include under this heading the German (later French and American) painter Max Ernst, who invented a visual mythology as intricate as Tolkien's and as

M. E. Warlick's MAX ERNST AND ALCHEMY: A MAGICIAN IN SEARCH OF MYTH (University of Texas, $50) is at once a biography, a history of surrealism, and an engaging interpretation of sixty years of painting. Professor Warlick has written before on Ernst's textless collage "novels," which are constructed of wood engravings from nineteenth-century novels (the latter a form practiced brilliantly by who decorated dressing screens this way). In this informative study she analyzes Ernst's alchemical symbolism in relation to the ups and downs of his life (exile, many marriages, a constant reinvention of himself right up to age eighty-four). Alchemy, as Jung wrote a big book to explain, was never so much a vain pseudoscience for turning lead into gold as a philosophical quest for enlightenment, its object (and still the occupation of scientists the world over)

THE ADAMS TYRANNY

Lost lessons from the Early Republic

By Richard N. Rosenfeld

Discussed in this essay:

John Adams, by David McCullough. Simon & Schuster. 751 pages. $35.

If we knew nothing more of John Adams than that his alternative life plan was to preach from the pulpit of Massachusetts's established Puritan church, that two of his three sons, Thomas and Charles, were alcoholics (one died of it), that the third, John Quincy, who dogged his father's footsteps to the presidency, was, by all accounts, "a cold, austere, and foreboding character"(J.Q.'s words), and that leading politicians of his day saw John Adams as emotionally, shall we say, unbalanced (Benjamin Franklin: "in some things, absolutely out of his senses"; Thomas Jefferson: "sometimes absolutely mad"; Madison: "sometimes wholly out of his senses"; Hamilton: "liable to paroxysms of anger which deprive him of self-command"), we might speculate that John Adams was an overbearing and hypercritical pedant, distant from friends and enemies alike. But the truth is far worse.

From the time Adams served, during the Revolution, as an ambassador to America's ally France (the French Foreign Minister Vergennes asked Congress to remove him "on account of a stubbornness, a pedantry, a self-sufficiency and a self-conceit which render him incapable of handling political questions") to his waning days as a one-term president (many party leaders then found that his character defects, as Hamilton charged, "unfit him for the office of Chief Magistrate"),

Richard N. Rosenfeld is the author of American Aurora: A Democratic-Republican Returns: The Suppressed History of Our Nation's Beginnings and the Heroic Newspaper That Tried to Report It (*St. Martin's*). *This essay was written at the invitation of the Thomas Paine National Historical Association and appears with its permission.*

John Adams's pathological narc repeatedly put his country's inter risk and ultimately doomed his alist Party to extinction.

In his own mind, he was ne fault. For his abortive diplom France and thereafter in the N lands, where he failed to obtain help or recognition until Americ dependence had been won, A blamed his fellow ambassador Ber Franklin and French Foreign M Vergennes: "I was pursued into land by the Intrigues of Vergenn Franklin at least as much as I ev been in France, and was embar and thwarted, both in my negoti for a loan and in those of a po nature, by their Friends, Agent Spies." For his problems as preside blamed Hamilton ("a bastard Br a Scotch Pedlar" is how Adam scribed him) and disloyal cabinet bers. To himself, John Adams w ways a hero. The historian D McCullough, in his most recent *John Adams*, has taken a similar

From the first sentence of M lough's beautifully written biogr ("In the cold, nearly colorless lig a New England winter, two me horseback traveled the coast roa low Boston, heading north"), we a on a dramatic and heroic ride wit founding father he aims to glorify, effectively through the worsh phrase "the colossus of independe which he employs as a chapter and then falsely attributes to Th Jefferson. (This nonexistent quot has been perpetuated in reviews even appeared as the cover line o issue of *The New York Times Boo view*.) To McCullough, Adams's suit of French aid was "one of his

...lest efforts," his final receipt of a ...h loan "simply extraordinary," his ...cessful tenure as ambassador to ...n (where he failed to negotiate a ...commercial agreement) under ...dable. "Nor could it be mannered ...another of his countrymen . . . I have done better." Etc.

...Cullough is hardly alone in this ...ach. In the last half century, as ...Massachusetts Historical Society ...ublished microfilm ...rfilm ...aining thousands ...thousands of ...ns's writings in ...ication and expo... ...r of his life, the ...t volume of this ...nal has shifted the ...of historical judg... ponderously in ...avor. This cornu... ...r, rich in the ...ticulars of what ...ns saw, thought, ...felt, has allowed ...id McCullough ...other historians to ...l Adams's trips ...s the sea, his re...ships with fami...mbers, and his ar...nts with friends ...nemies alike. As ...lt, McCullough's ...graphy of Adams ...kes of the aura of ...biography, and, in ...g so, it raises im...rtant questions of ...ity and verity.



Who was John Adams? "John Adams, it was said, was a 'good husband, a good father, a good citizen, and a good man,'" writes McCullough. This is generally how Adams saw himself, but one wonders whether his son Charles ("I renounce him," declared Adams on hearing of Charles's alcoholism) or Thomas ("a brute in manners and a curse to his family" is how a nephew described him) would have characterized Adams this way. Or whether Congressman Matthew Lyon, whom Adams jailed for calling his presidency "a continual grasp for power," would have upheld Adams's good citizenship. Or whether any of the other democratic newspaper editors whom Adams imprisoned for criticizing his presidency (a "reign of witches" is how Jefferson described the period) would have found him admirable. Or whether the fifteen boatloads of would-be Americans who fled the country in fear of Adams's arbitrary powers would have agreed that he was a good man.

"Who was John Adams?" becomes, therefore, a matter of whom one asks and what one values, and it is here that David McCullough's *John Adams* fails in a most regrettable way. For McCullough evidently accepts Adams's belief that Americans define themselves more by their independence from England (which Adams certainly advocated) than they do by their devotion to popular democracy and the Bill of Rights (which Adams tried to suppress). Only by accepting this inverted system of American priorities could McCullough justify, for example, devoting more than twenty pages to Adams's ocean voyages ("brave") during the Revolution and fewer than five pages (most of them exculpatory) to his Alien and Sedition Acts. Only by so doing could McCullough completely [illegible] the violence and intimidation that Adams's federal army and private militias dealt his political enemies, driving some into shelters for self-protection. Had McCullough chosen, unlike Adams, to attach a higher value to popular democracy and the Bill of Rights than to the nation's separation from England, he might have described John Adams the way many of the nation's democrats, including Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, and Franklin's grandson and protégé, Benjamin Franklin Bache, judged him—that is, as an unfit imitator of monarchy who, in fact, opposed popular democracy and trampled on the Bill of Rights.

In the spring of 1776, shortly before the colonies declared independence, Paine visited John Adams, reporting that Adams "was for independence, because he expected to be made great by it; but," Paine added, "his head was as full of kings, queens, and knaves as a pack of cards." Paine met with Adams to discuss Paine's pamphlet "Common Sense" which had electrified the country into support for independence by arguing, [illegible] that monarchy was indeed [illegible] that power should lie with the democratic majority, expressing itself [illegible] simple representative council [illegible] members would be elected [illegible] to regard to wealth or property. Adams saw Paine's pamphlet [illegible] a mere desire to please the democratic Party" (and later wrote: "What a poor ignorant, Malicious, Prejudiced, Corrupted Mortal was Paine" ["Common Sense"]).

To counter the pamphlet's democratic tendencies, Adams published his own pamphlet, "Thoughts on Gov-



ry of Hamilton and the so-called
g Federalists. Adams was then, as
ys, a High Federalist. Indeed, it
Adams's cabinet and Hamilton
urged moderation on a bellicose
ms, whose initial drafts of the
ch 19 message called for a decla-
on of war against France (though
inal message was simply a call to
). It was Adams who inflamed
country, declaring days of prayer
fasting, signing measure after
sure of war preparations, exhort-
communities throughout the
try to assume a "warlike charac
jailing newspaper editors who
cized his war measures, ordering
navy to attack French ships wher-
they might be found, encourag-
private volunteer militias (which
ned in his name and terrorized his
ics), and even donning a military
orm to receive and address those
tias in the president's house.

o why, then, did Adams make
e with France in 1800? For reasons
ess heroic than McCullough (and
ms) would have us believe. When
ms proposed, on February 18,
), to send a final peace mission to
ce, there was reason to regard his
osal as an insincere and empty
ure, at odds with his consistently
cose personal, professional, and
logical attitude toward France
l the French Revolution), and as
ely a conciliatory response to the
y diplomats and other important
ens who brought word of peaceful
ch intentions, to the private ex-
ations of even his own children,
o petitions against his war prepa-
ons from 90 percent of Pennsyl-
ans who had voted in the prior
dential election. Soon after the
ouncement, Adams restructured
mission so that it was less likely to
rt in the foreseeable future and
would, as Jefferson wrote Madi-
"leave more time for new projects
ovocation." For the next eight
ths, Adams did absolutely noth-
o see that a peace mission de-
d.

ut then, in October, Adams did
r the peace mission to depart,
ast the wishes of Hamilton and
in his cabinet. By this action,
s earned the admiration of Mc-
ugh and many other historians of
the Early Republic who have con-
cluded that Adams was a moderate
who defied High Federalists in his par-
ty. There is, however, much more to
the story than that.

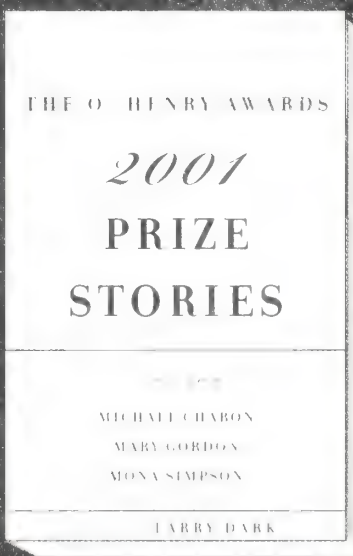
A few weeks after the February an-
nouncement and only three days be-
fore Adams left Philadelphia for a sev-
en-month retreat to his home state of
Massachusetts (Adams still holds the
worst record for absenteeism of any
American president), Adams ordered
his brand-new federal army into Penn-
sylvania's rural Northampton, Bucks,
and Montgomery counties to suppress
"misrepresentations" and other "sub-
versive" antiwar activities of Penn-
sylvania farmers, who were then
protesting Adams's war taxes and his
Alien and Sedition Acts. To lead this
mission, Adams chose William
Macpherson, commander of the pri-
vate and infamous Macpherson Blues
militia legions, which had, for more
than a year, been terrorizing Adams's
political opponents in Philadelphia
and elsewhere. Once in the country,
troops of the federal army invaded the
private homes of Pennsylvania farm
families, terrorized men, women, and
children alike, tore down symbols of
political opposition to Adams (such as
"liberty poles"), and publicly whipped
a newspaper editor who reported their
misconduct.

When the army returned to
Philadelphia in the middle of May, a
group of thirty army officers paid a vis-
it to the city's leading Jeffersonian
newspaper, the *Philadelphia Aurora*,
whose editor, William Duane, had pub-
lished charges that certain troops had
lived "at free quarters" (i.e., in people's
homes, without their permission, in
contravention of the Third Amend-
ment). These army officers dragged
Duane into the middle of Philadel-
phia's Market Street and beat him and
his sixteen-year-old son mercilessly un-
til both lay unconscious on the ground.
For the next two weeks, according to
the press, "the streets of Philadelphia
were filled with crowds of people who
wanted nothing but *the firing of the first
musket* to precipitate Pennsylvania, and
perhaps the continent, into the hor-
rors of a civil war."

Pennsylvanians were outraged. As
Adams conceded, "The army was as
unpopular as if it had been a ferocious

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O. HENRY
Awards

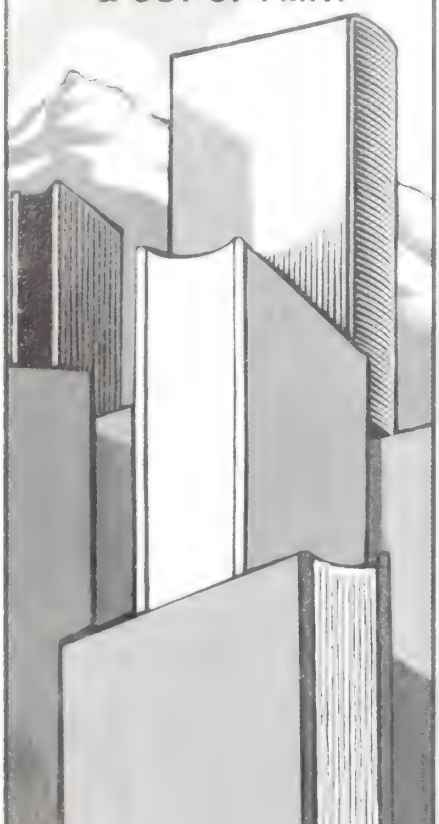
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trary, he chose peace to save his ca
his reputation, and his hold on
presidency, all of which his natio
pudiated when it replaced him
the democrat Thomas Jefferson i
election of 1800.

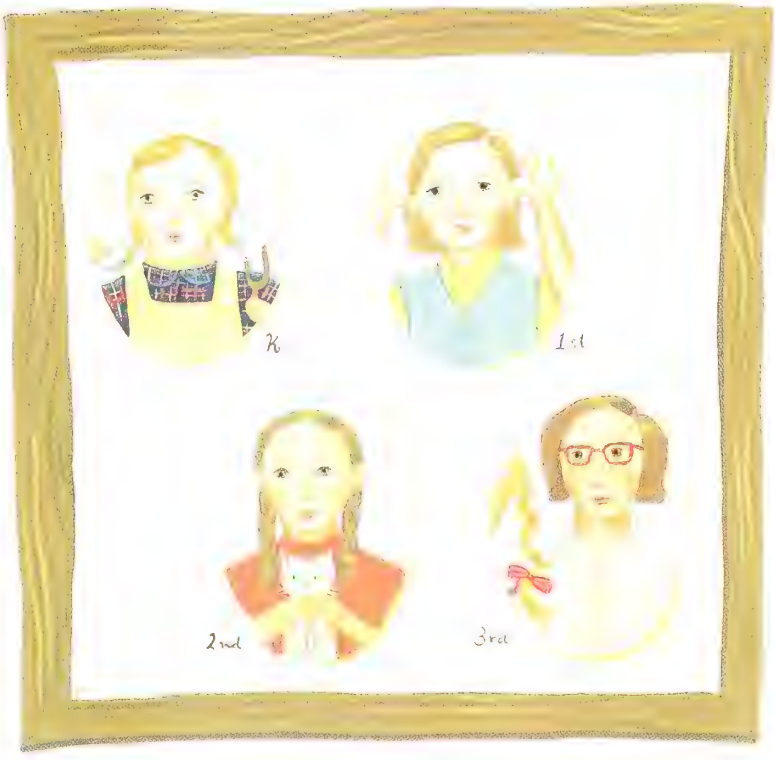
When Adams left the p
dency, he did so in disg
He was the founding f
who had opposed popular democr
subverted the Bill of Rights,
brought his nation to the brink of
il war. He had visited on his poli
opponents an American reign of te
which, even in old age, Jefferson c
never let Adams forget. "Whethe
character of the times is justly
trayed or not," Jefferson wrote Ac
in 1813, "posterity will decide. Bu
one feature of them they can n
decide, the sensations excited in
yet firm minds by the terrorism o
day. None can conceive who dic
witness them, and they were fe
one party only."

When news of Adams's de
reached Philadelphia, the *Philadel*
Aurora (whose founding editor,
other than Benjamin Franklin Ba
died awaiting trial for sedition)
nounced the nation "rescued Fron
talons of Monarchists. In spite o
trigue, In spite of terror, In spite o
constitutional laws, In spite of Br
influence, In spite of the Stan
Army, In spite of the Sedition L
Jefferson's victory, the paper fore
"will become as celebrated in histo
the 4th of July 1776 for the ema
pation of the American states f
British influence and tyranny
monarch, it seemed, had been
thereof."

It would take a mighty hagiogr
er to place John Adams on a pede
and indeed for two hundred year
one has been equal to the task.
now, in the eloquent David Mc
lough, Adams may finally have fo
his man. McCullough's finely cra
and eminently readable *John Ad*
would doubtless please the fou
whom democrats dubbed "His Ro
dity." But in pandering to the hi
remunerative national yearning fo
roes, David McCullough denies A
icans the critical lessons in liberty
democracy that every history of
Early Republic should teach.

ADMISSIONS

By Mona Simpson



January 22, 1993

[Anne Stevenson
ale
r to of Admission
l Lowell School
5 West 84th Street
York, NY 10024

r Ms. Anne
tevenson Haley,
m writing to ex-
lain my daughter
s behavior during
e interview last
Wednesday. The Low-
ell school remains our
r choice, and we
uld like to give her
ry chance at ad-
ition to your kinder-
rten class.

rst of all, we
uld like to insist
wing for the re-
t of your office chandelier. From
ft your assistant, Ms. Nesbitt, told
s it is original to the building, and
v located several craftsmen who
a experience working on antique
xtures from the Federal period.

oe is fond of fashioning sling-
rs from Central Park twigs and
ber bands, and I'm afraid we ar-
ved early for the interview, lin-
gered in the park, and then failed to check her pockets.

From what I understand, the first twenty minutes or so went wonderfully; Zoe reported that "the lady in the library" taught her how to make origami swans, and Zoe even played for her on the piano (Schubert's "March Militaire," I suspect). They were working on an orange paper ocelot when it was time for Zoe to go, with the other little girl, to your office, where we, the parents, were waiting.

The pairing of the families was not an auspicious one for Zoe. I was already a bit concerned—while I of course understand your need to "double up," due to the sheer volume of applicants. The other little girl (in her plaid skirt, black cashmere sweater, black tights, and Doc Martens) was truly one of the most beautiful and stylish children I've ever seen. (Didn't her mother mention having been a model before quitting to "*be* with her children" and, also, incidentally, to run the preschool's fund-raising drive?) The little girl seemed to possess a completely different temperament than my daughter. She was, in fact, a type of child Zoe later described to me as "pretty princess perfect."

Her mother told me that she was studying ballet, as well as karate, had a younger brother, a dog, a country house—really, the perfect everything.

Zoe, as you of course saw, is an exuberant child, wildly inventive. (I

[illegible] the author most recently, of Keck Road, out this month in paperback from Vintage.

she replied, "I think I will become a
Charlie Chaplin and has in fact
been Charlie for the last two Hal-
loweens. She knows her father
blah blah blah, b-l-a-h spells blah, blah
blah blah," I didn't recognize my
charming, exuberant daughter. I
think she got herself into a corner,
suddenly realized her joke was not
funny, and didn't know quite how
to recover from the humiliation.
That's background for "the acci-
dent" involving your eyeglasses and
forehead and light fixture.

I know you're contending with a
stack of applications (your orienta-
tion implied, what? 800 this year?),
like to say, in one way or another,
my child is not usually
like this!

And here I am saying it. My child
like this.

I'm not asking you, though, to
her recommendations, even, per-
head of her preschool, where she has
much for your time and attentions.

With high hopes,
Mary Said-Ford

Age 5 kindergarten applicant

P.S. A check is enclosed for chan-
delier damages as well as a listing of
skilled craftsmen experienced with

April 2, 1993

Ms. Anne Stevenson Haley

351 West 84th Street
New York, NY 10024

Dear Ms. Anne Stevenson Haley,

I was very melancholy toda
I felt the thin, rather than the
er, letter inside the envelop
The Lowell School. It seeme
eighteen again, standing
fence waiting for the mail ma
to come down our road with t
ters from faraway colleges.

We were disappointed th
were unable to admit Zoe, tho
ter the interview we were not
ly surprised. We are told, thes
to instruct our children with "
quences" rather than punish
(Zoe calls them "take-awaym
We realize that her wildness
of the interview—her father
going through a "rough patch
full responsibility—cost her
in your kindergarten class. T
I'm afraid, too big a conse
ever to tell her.

Naturally, we are extremely
ful to be on your waiting list.
ask you whether we might
word by phone? I'm wonde
there was anything in our a
tion, besides the unfortunate
view, that would impair
chances in the future.

With gratitude and r
Mary Sai
Mother
Age 5 "waiting" kinder
ap

P.S.—I am hoping against hop
when you walked up 83rd
pulling on your gloves, at abou
ten weeks ago Wednesday, y
not overhear our discussion.

I suppose there is no reas
to be frank: after our "paren
terview with you at The
School, we had a fight, a ver
one, on the sooty shovele
walk. It was midafternoon—
vate time of day. We stood
corner, freezing, about to ge
cab or walk, as James always
back to his brownstone office
people.

It was a time of day we
never saw each other.

And maybe for the first m
ever, we had a sense of

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Dear Ms. Anne Stevenson Haley,

How are you? I hope you had a [illegible] school season must be well under way by now, the community you've created (by hand, so to speak) begin[illegible] I received the bill from Mr. Farenese (which was extremely nominal). He emphasized to me how cheerful he felt, working [illegible]

Zoe has started at the Open Air School, and, to our relief, she has already made friends and runs into [illegible] with speed and joy.

[illegible] school as her own, we've been a bit [illegible] and traditional academics. We [illegible] to apply to The Lowell School for the first [illegible] enough to talk to me about Zoe's application, and we both agreed that the timing of the interview was unfortunate. I hope we will have better [illegible]

Sincerely,
[illegible]
Mother of Zoe
Age 5 — transfer applicant

P.S.—Did Jeannie Hackett's letter [illegible] how much Zoe reminds her of their Michael, at this age. We are, of course, struck with how impressed Jeannie and Dave have been by The Lowell School and with its shaping [illegible]

January 11, 1994

[illegible] interview Zoe went this [illegible] Sometimes I feel our daugh[illegible] unusually sensitive to nuance [illegible] think she somehow gleaned[illegible] philosophy (though we'll never [illegible] her, of course, how much fi[illegible] I'd been explaining on [illegible] school tour that "bad languag[illegible] will not be tolerated here" [illegible] swearing would result in e[illegible] sion). I fear Zoe's intuited "k[illegible] edge" perversely triggered her[illegible] fortunate comment.

Her extreme language in yo[illegible] ter with Mrs. [illegible] who seems [illegible] a wonderful teacher, by the [illegible] forced us to face the fact that [illegible] for better or worse, must feel [illegible] fortable and settled at the Ope[illegible] School.

I wanted to thank you for [illegible] to keep Zoe's application on[illegible] Since our first visit to The Lo[illegible] School, I've had a very part[illegible] feeling about its rightness [illegible] and, I hope, our rightness for[illegible] You'll probably be hearing fro[illegible] every year at application [illegible] Someday, I feel, we'll en[illegible] together.

Mary Sai[illegible]
Mother of [illegible]
Age 6—kinderg[illegible]

P.S.—I've gone back and forth [illegible] this all weekend, but I've decid[illegible] ask Sage, Zoe's teacher, to give [illegible] brief call. I've explained to Sag[illegible] we will be staying at the Ope[illegible] School and extracted her prom[illegible] secrecy, but I needed you to [illegible] that the comment "I don't w[illegible] go to your damn school" was s[illegible] ingly uncharacteristic of our [illegible] natured child.

And now that we're ove[illegible] done with trying to impress yo[illegible] you! I can say what I've wa[illegible] tell you since last summer. In A[illegible] we were in Sag Harbor visitin[illegible] Kimballs (Jeremy is producin[illegible] husband's newest film), and w[illegible] the chance to meet your dau[illegible] Carrie and Isobel Kimball play[illegible] us after dinner. You have reas[illegible] be proud. I can't imagine Zoe a[illegible] rie's age. You are truly at the [illegible] end of childhood. You must [illegible] soundly.

November 6, 1994

g. Anne Stevenson Haley
owell School
West 84th Street
York, NY 10024

Ms. Anne Stevenson Haley,
though you probably guess how
r I am, I fully understand your pol-
not taking transfers for your sec-
ade. I can't resist sending you
ape of Zoe's recital anyway. Al-
ch the saxophone is almost as big
s, she commands quite a sound.
ould you be willing to talk to
bout the supplementation of
s curriculum? As we've men-
d before, we're content enough
the Open Air School (Zoe,
ay, enjoys her life there, partic-
y her *social* life), but we would
tually like her to learn to read
write.

With wistful gratitude,
Mary Said-Ford
Mother of Zoe
Age 7—first grader

◆

May 18, 1995

Anne Stevenson Haley
Lowell School
vond)

e Ms. Anne Haley,
ank you for meeting with me.
visit proved bittersweet, as I'm
you understand. The sound of
ans, the footsteps on stone
's, the dearness, dare I say the
ousness—well, what can I tell
progressive "developmental"
ation is nothing like The Low-
chool. Just as I was leaving, a
of girls in their plaid uniforms
kneesocks and oxfords came fil-
out of the library by the willow
ed with origami ships, and I
the girl with whom we'd had
original interview, the girl Zoe
perhaps presciently envied,
ing her "little princess perfect."
girl still looked beautiful and
seemed, if anything, less perfect
the good ways. Her arms were
ging loosely, she had a happy
distraction

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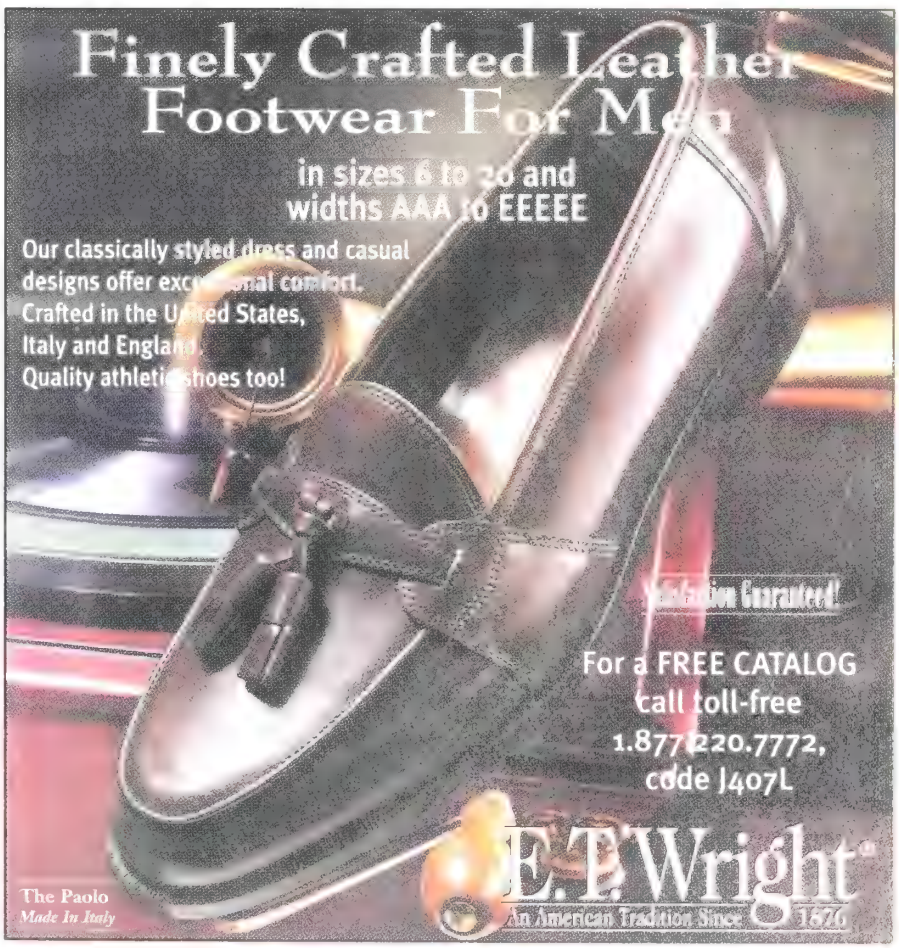
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Computers, Learning, and Literacy



Thank you again.

With admiration,
Mary Saul-Ford
Mother of Zoe

January 13, 1996

Ms. Anne Stevenson Haley
The Lowell School
351 West 84th Street
New York, NY 10024

Dear Ms. Anne Stevenson Haley,

We were mortified to learn of Michael's expulsion. His family, as I'm sure you know, feels utterly devastated and adrift. Like you, they do not approve of "moonies" and do not believe that in today's climate a [illegible] permitted to pull his pants down on the playground, even on a dare, even when offered a "lunchable" by another, perhaps impulsive child. I have known Jeannie and Dave for years now, and I've always been struck by their commitment to organic, nutritional meals, but I now wonder whether Michael, who [illegible] to McDonalds, might have been unusually vulnerable to the enticements of a classmate's lunch box.

to permitted Michael his ex- his remorse for frightening tha boy and also for damaging h phone.

Perhaps given how upse Hacketts feel—they conste themselves, as well as Michael t part of the Lowell family ad fifth grade community [illegible] that you are not accepting t applications for third graders.

Zoe's connection to Mrs. been profound and transform They moved on from *Nate the G* to real books, and Zoe will b tinuing with Mrs. T for the f able future.

I do expect that one of thes you will have an opening, an will then receive a proper and p application from us. In the mea I only offer my admiration fo and the continued hope that sch our child will join a chastened readmitted Michael on the ground in her own Lowell unifo

It is admissions time again season so to speak. Each yea the snows begin I think of you

A h
Mary Sau-F
Mother f

P.S.—At the Kimballs' Chri party, we met Carrie again a told us her good news. Brown's decision, her first choice! I u stand the girls still have their ensemble, but that night the w not playing, just walking arou gether in a group like a cloud.

P.P.S.—I have begun to work (My office number is 864-59 the file.) I am also, myself, at t taking Latin.

October 2

Ms. Anne Stevenson Haley
Director of Admission
The Lowell School
351 West 84th Street
New York, NY 10024

Dear Ms. Anne Stevenson Ha

We were so thrilled to lear

I that you will be accepting ap
ons to fill (a very few, she said)
next year's fourth grade.
aps it was Mrs. T's general ex-
ice in preparation for her de-
are, but she emphasized her
on that Zoe will be a strong
date, provided she makes it
gh the hurdle of the interview.
great that the Fulbright will
Mrs. T to spend the year
ng in Athens! With Buster!
planning to take Zoe to visit
ime this spring while James
uster are filming. It's a testa-
to your school that you are
o hire and keep teachers of
T's caliber. And how wise of
allow her to leave in the mid-
the year! Who expects love at
or any—time of life?)
n sending a tape of Zoe playing
er most recent saxophone
l, a list of her chess rankings,
video of Zoe on trapeze. The
ers reports (not counting Mrs.
are, albeit, not the strongest
on of Zoe's application. Emo-
lly, she still has some growing

is with bated breath that we
urselves, once again, into "the
ssions process."

With eager anticipation,
Mary Said-Ford
Mother of Zoe
Age 9—fourth-grade applicant

•

April 1, 1997

Anne Stevenson Haley
tor of Admission
owell School
West 84th Street
York, NY 10024

Ms. Anne Stevenson Haley,
ope this letter reaches you. We
extremely disappointed to re-
a mere form letter rejecting
application for the fourth
. After all these years and many
rs, we somehow felt we'd at least
ged to climb up out of the pool
loubt vast) of recipients of such
rs. Even after our unfortunate
go-round with you, Zoe had
placed on the waiting list.

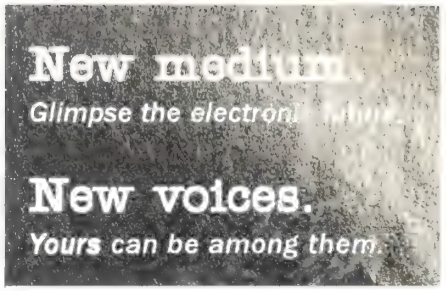
We were surprised—no, actually downright stunned—when, on the day of the interview, we were told that you were not in and a Ms. Wheelis would talk to us. Ms. Wheelis, as no doubt you know, does not have your manners or your air of knowing that even though this is an interview for a child to be admitted to a school, we are all people alive on a troubled earth, enduring our own tragedies and joys, our hopes and desires helplessly intersecting.

Now that it seems all but certain that Zoe never will attend The Lowell School, I don't mind admitting that I was taken with you, personally. In the way I'd once developed an overwhelming admiration for the man who later became Zoe's father, I was struck, the first time I met you, with the tentative feeling I've sometimes had for another mother, when I've sensed that perhaps we will manage to become friends. I liked what I believed to be the largeness of your character. I thought that when you saw my child you did not judge her for the worst of her qualities, which, for some perverse reason, seemed always to come into prominence during interviews at The Lowell School. I always loved your kind of wild hair and the way the gray, as it streaked in, was pure white. I described you, to friends, who questioned the provenance of your accent, as a darker-haired Virginia Woolf, whose clothes seemed purchased by a modernist architect husband. (I'm thinking of your black lorgnette, the severe glasses, your patrician legs in opaque stockings.) I'd often said I could see you equally as the editor of *Vogue* or *The New York Review of Books*.

For many years I regretted the coincidence of your walking by as we were fighting. I'd always wonder whether you heard my now-ex-husband bellowing, "WELL, FUCK THEM THEN!"

Now, for the first time, I truly don't care.

I felt very hurt to have been shuttled off to Ms. Wheelis, who seemed to enjoy her position of power altogether too much.



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Mary Said

, the first time, I'll be all ke to
ou not as Saint Peter sitting at
h antique desk, with a large stack
elders on the left and the much
ler chosen pile of the elect on
right, but as another working
an, a mother, like me, with your
r share of cares, sadnesses, and
plaint.

's such, may I, as a gesture of my
itude and my hopes, this time
for my daughter's life but for my
, take you out to lunch'

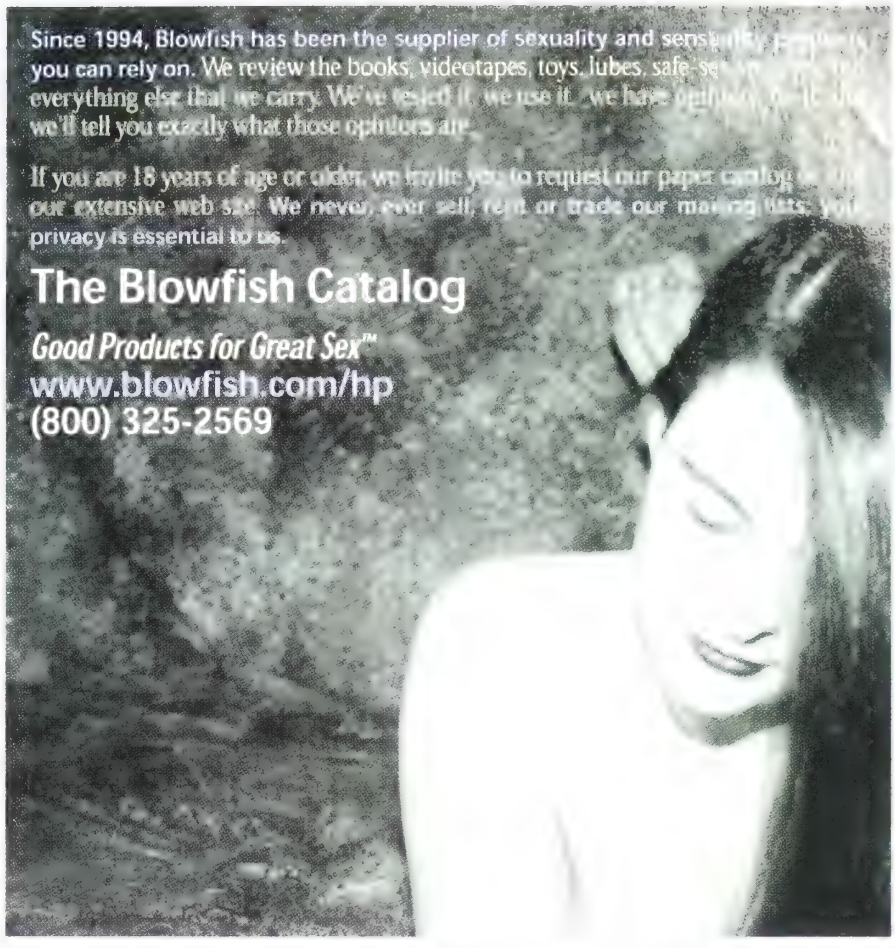
et's now talk about ourselves

Fondly,
Mary Said

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te House; **3** Association of American
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lantic City)



SOLUTION TO THE MAGUS PUZZLE

"NOTES FOR 'OKIMI SCENE":

[one of the Acts] has been omitted. In order the letters spelling out the [illegible] of OMEGA's

Parsec-cutting by Dan Amos.

[illegible] asterisk (*)

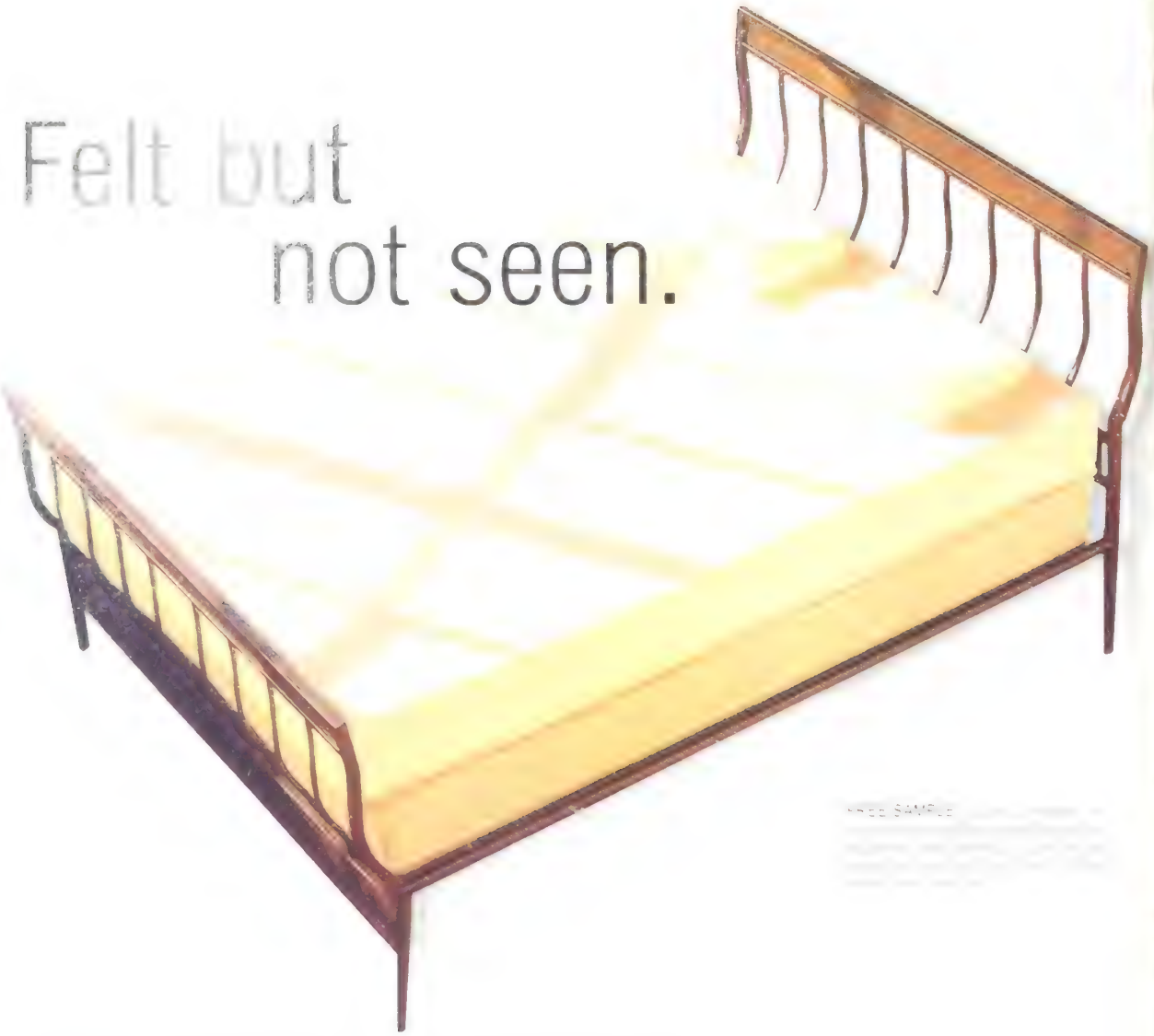
ACROSS: 1. P.O.-ss-ess, 6. Wal(nu)t, 11. ex(c)iting, 12. (Mayo)rd, 13. (comm)ie, 14. [illegible], 17. [illegible], 19. [illegible], 22. riddle-ips, 23. [illegible], 24. [illegible], 27. [illegible], 32. [illegible], 34. [illegible], 36. [illegible].

DOWNS: 1. P.O. Pounces, 2. hidden, 3. [illegible], 4. trex(We trev.), 5. [illegible], 6. two [illegible], 7. (O)mates, [illegible], 8. [illegible], 9. [illegible], 10. [illegible], 15. [illegible], 16. [illegible], 18. [illegible], 20. riddle-ins, 21. [illegible], 25. had(rev.)-ad(rev.), 27. homophone, [illegible], 28. [illegible], 29. [illegible], 31. [illegible].

P	O	S	S	E	S	W	A	L	N	U	T	S
L	G	K	E	X	T	I	N	G	O	N	R	I
O	R	A	L	E	R	N	T	A	N	N	I	N
D	E	T	U	R	E	D	S	F	C	E	M	O
S	P	E	N	T	E	U	N	I	O	R	M	F
T	A	B	L	E	T	P	S	X	N	V	E	O
A	R	O	O	N	R	S	W	A	F	E	R	M
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A	H	E	A	D	I	L	Z	C	I	L	A	I
T	E	R	A	G	N	I	Z	E	T	A	K	O
E	N	S	U	E	D	A	O	D	Y	N	E	N

[illegible] the puzzle [illegible] Mr. Mendel Hyde [illegible] quilts an [illegible]

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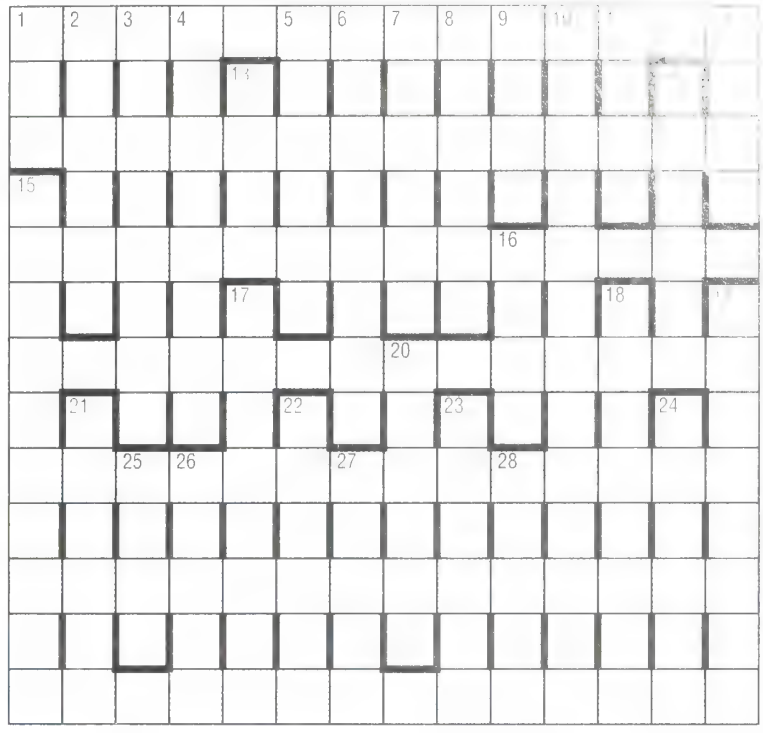
PUZZLE

Missing Links

By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

Across answers, all either six, seven, or eight letters long, are clued in alphabetical order. Two of these answers are then to be entered in each of the seven shaded Across rows, side by side, not overlapping. What determines the pairing is that the end of the first word and the beginning of the second spell out a linking word of five, six, or seven letters. These seven linking words have something in common and, simply by being in this puzzle, may be said to be "missing links."

Down entries are normal. Clue answers include four proper names. 7 Across is uncommon and not in many dictionaries. 7, 8, and 14 Down are also uncommon (one is a foreign word borrowed into English). As always, mental repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 95.



Across

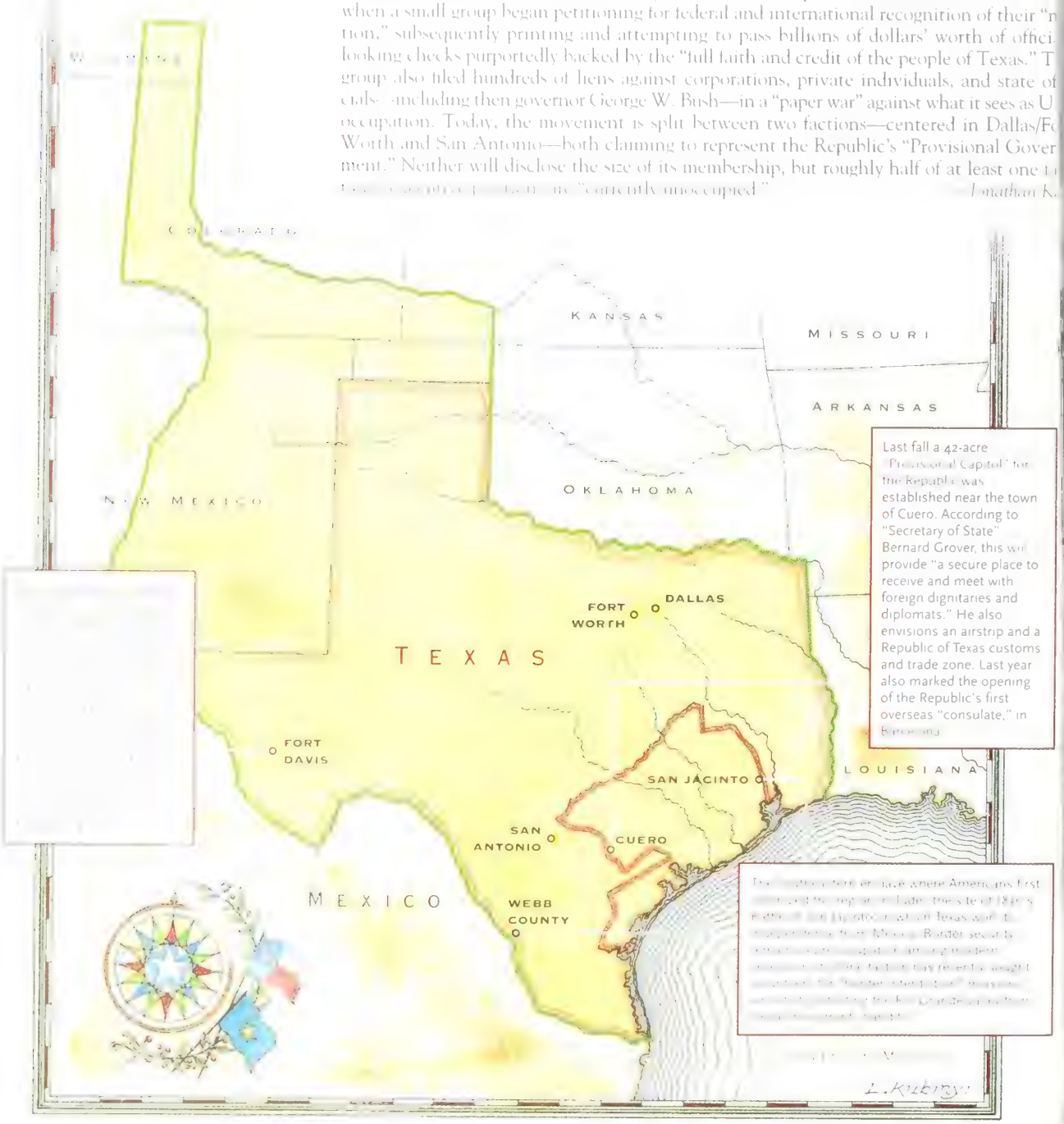
a. One taken in commercial transport to pee
b. Broadcasting seed, men controlled land
c. Make light about nervous ping produced by a lot of shares in a farm?
d. Look at ticket sales for *Picnic* venue
e. Arch that could be built into spinet
f. Barber's technique composing *Grave Nil*
g. Something happening to room inside—My God!
h. Blanket maker drives back, gosh, a trailer
i. Dictionary has a friend loving your mother
j. Not once going back into physical training or bar
k. In audition, making you read would shake material
l. Got up on haunches to get fruit in a flower garden
m. Stow away, almost catch sight of Greek island
n. John flowers, having once been insular!

Down

1. Have reform now (3)
2. Woman sheltered by Mandela in exile (6)
3. Shed Edward found under low buildings (8)
4. Lying down when Juliet takes the potion? Excellent (8)
5. Green in the theater, a player from Miami drops in (6)
6. Being within the law, the French woman covers it with [illegible] (4)
7. Here's the answer to [illegible] ket! (4-2)
8. [illegible] but man in eve (6)
9. [illegible] (4)
10. Warner Brothers, e.g., displaying hope, ran script and (3)
11. Repellent required for bug: Lysol (4)
12. [illegible] (4)
13. [illegible] (6)
14. [illegible]
15. [illegible]
16. [illegible]
17. [illegible]
18. [illegible]
19. [illegible]
20. [illegible] (6)
21. [illegible]
22. [illegible] (6)
23. [illegible]
24. [illegible]
25. Sleep not quite twelve (4)
26. [illegible]
27. [illegible] (8)
28. [illegible] (3)

Contest Rules: [illegible] Answers must be received by [illegible] 1992. If your [illegible] Harper's, please include [illegible] Senders of the first three correct solutions opened at random will receive [illegible] be printed in the November issue. Winners of the July puzzle [illegible] and David Mackie, Seattle.

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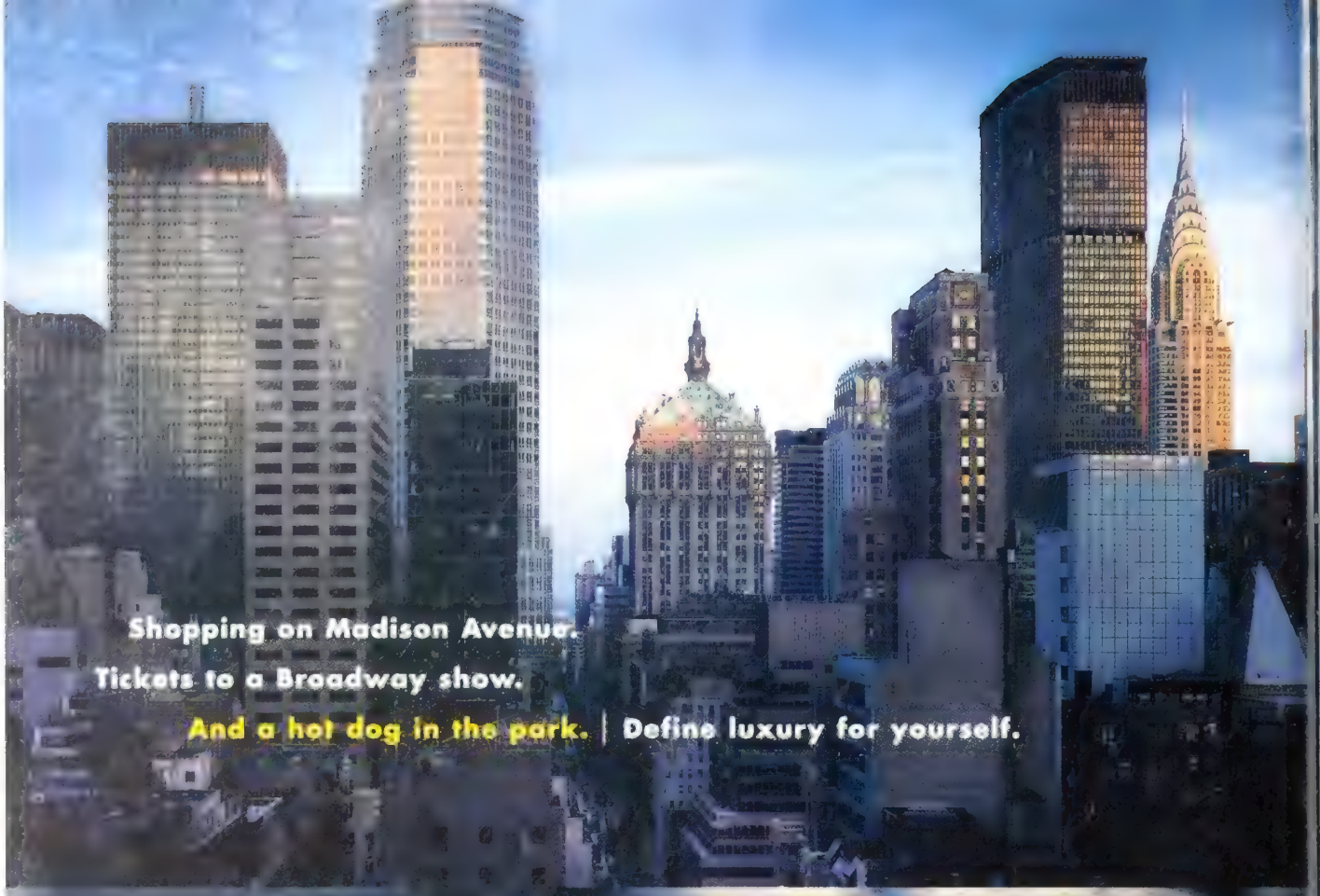


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HARPER'S MAGAZINE · OCTOBER [illegible]



A GAZA DIARY
Scenes from the Palestinian Uprising
By Chris Hedges

◆

DINOSAUR DREAMS
Reading the Bones of America's Psychic Mascot
By Jack Hitt

DEATH IN SLOW MOTION
A Descent into Alzheimer's
By Eleanor Cooney

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN CAN DANCE
A story by Haruki Murakami

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MEGAN McDONALD
EVENT COORDINATOR
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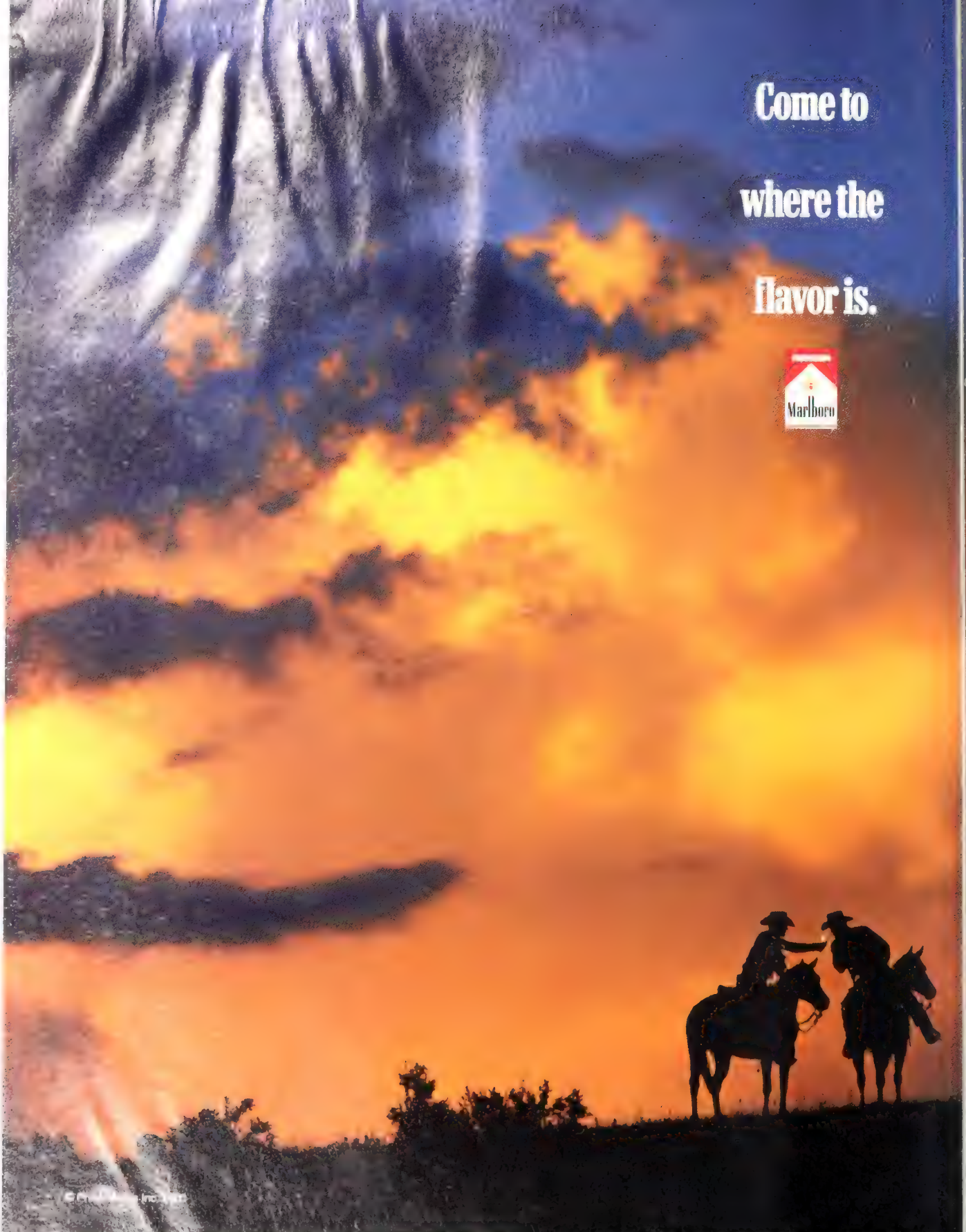
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HARPER'S

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OCTOBER 2001

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HARPER'S

LETTERS

One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest

As technology becomes able to displace some of the biological and even mental constraints that have heretofore served as the anchors of our identity, it's essential to ask what bounds we might attempt to impose on human nature. Lauren Slater, in her article about the plastic surgeon Joe Rosen ["Dr. Daedalus," July], is correct to meditate on this most difficult question. It is the definitive struggle of our era, and I commend *Harper's Magazine* for devoting space to it.

There are two gross failures in the essay, however, and I have to point them out to you. In these hideous days of ill-informed, self-destructive technological brinkmanship (global warming, missile defense, anti-conservation energy policy), voices from the opposition (among which I count *Harper's*) must be able to take the moral high ground when it comes to making scientific arguments. Anyone who has gone to high school should be alarmed by Slater's claim that the cerebellum is devoted to controlling one's belly button and furthermore evocativ "ancient blue connections, a pr tive love." If we have to be dunce this degree in order to be literary lose our authority and can no lo make fun of Donald Rumsfeld's Dick Cheney's fantasies.

The second failing is far w Because Lauren Slater lacks (o least rejects) scientific literacy, can't distinguish Rosen's manif speculative ideas, such as wings people, from immediate and pr cal questions, such as how we w recognize the onset of a serious logical-warfare attack, which m in the first hours amount to no m than a bunch of individuals w colds.

It is quite simply painful to re hit piece about someone who is ing so much good for the world. worked with Joe Rosen for ov decade and a half on computer ulations to improve surgical comes. It is not unreasonabl guess that Joe's pioneering wor this area, which went unmentio in the article, will directly be you or a loved one in the fu Slater writes at length about he ternal struggles with som Rosen's speculative ideas, whic comes to face somewhat more c ly at the end of her piece. enough. But during her in creeped-out phase she indulg unchecked visions of Rosen as ster and insists on printing

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te and gratuitous insults to his
acter that float in her mind
corrects herself by the end, but
before she has reported to us
a nasty thing she thought about

oesn't this strategy seem pure
and narcissistic' If her point is
we should be concerned with
it is to be human, should she
y privilege her internal process
ne degree that, in effect, she as-
nates another person's charac-
even if only temporarily.'
ch undercuts our humanity
, speculative medicine or in-
ane journalism' I think it's the
r, since it is ultimately the
s, not the technology, that
er.

n Lanier
Scientist
onal Tele-immersion Initiative
York City

en Slater responds.

surprises me to read that I have
ssimated Dr. Rosen's character
seems like a rather melodramat-
se of language, something those
concerned with literacy, scien-
or otherwise, should beware of
ny case, Rosen's character,
h I aimed to portray in all its
nces, is still standing, with all its
s ns and idiosyncrasies and grace
humor, and it is my hope that
ece reflects these things. I tried
rite a layered portrait of a man
a series of complex, troubling
that he somewhere in the bor-
and between dream and waketul-
absurdity and reality.

a writer who practices portrai-
among other things, I give my
internal processes some weight
space. That's because portrai-
in my opinion, is the intersec-
between subject and writer; its
ns not to capture a reified truth
to present a point of view, a
chick, that's the camera, my
Clearly Jaron Lanier has a dit-
t eye, and perhaps he should
t to make his own portrait of
man in question, and, if he
, I will do my best not to
st that he didn't see it my way.
la difference.



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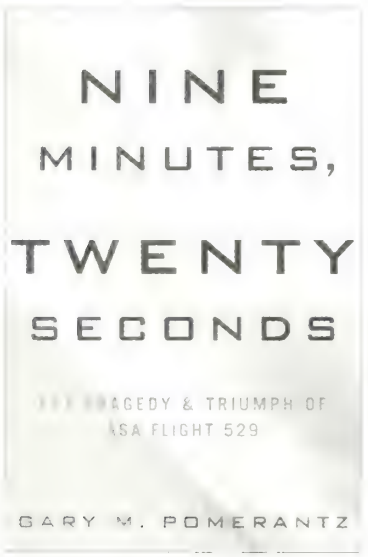
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OF WORDS [illegible] PULL YOU IN,
TO SUCK YOU IN, SO THAT YOU
CAN'T TURN THE PAGES FAST
ENOUGH AND THE OUTSIDE
WORLD FALLS AWAY?

This book delivers an experience we all pray never to have, but about which we feel an undeniable curiosity. [Pomerantz] has spent time with people who dropped out of the sky and lived to tell about it."

—Melissa Fay Greene,
author of *Praying for Sheetrock*



[illegible]erful a book as you are

David J. Garrow, Pulitzer Prize-winning

Dominick Dunne, [illegible]

As for scientific literacy, well, those who have the hubris to claim they really have it worry me most. I do not claim to know all the facts (though I'm a doctoral-level psychologist with training in neuropsychology). Lanier exaggerates a putative error about brain schematics, simply for effect: Nowhere did I state that the cerebellum is "devoted to controlling one's belly button." It certainly is not. In general, when it comes to brain theory, humility, which Lanier's letter lacks, should rule the day; we have many, many elegant hypotheses with really no answers. Twenty years ago, we all thought there was a single memory system. Now we think there are several. We used to think there was one visual pathway. Now we think there are at least two: the retinocollicular projection and the geniculostriate cortical projection. Who knows, though? By the time I've typed these words, theory may have changed yet again. When it comes to the brain, and writing about the brain, lyricism is probably far more accurate than science that pretends to an authority [illegible]

Dr. Rosen's lovely vision of muscle-powered human flight is totally chimerical, made so, alas, by the basic laws of biology and physics. Even a small person would need chest muscles the size of pillows and wings [illegible] lighter and a hell of a lot more flexible bound and the heaviest birds that do take off soar mostly rather than flap. It is possible that Rosen's techniques might be able to give people wings big and light enough that they could jump off a tall building and sail a few miles. But in general, forget it, doctor; it can't happen! I'm bemused by the strange fact that none of Rosen's critics spotted the real flaw in his concept but worried about surgery and ethics.

Pacific Grove, Calif.

Lauren Slater has written as provocative an article as I have ever [illegible] tence that Dr. Rosen's thous[illegible] except, as she charmingly note[illegible] "window washers." If I had los[illegible] use of my legs and were tryin[illegible] make my way in a wheelcha[illegible] my body a set of wings that w[illegible] allow me to fly, at least at low[illegible] tudes. If Rosen is to be perceive[illegible] existing far out in his own str[illegible] place, the reasons for his exile have to be more compelling [illegible] his endorsement of wings.

Andrea M. Smith
New York City

I was appalled by Lauren Sl[illegible] article. I am ashamed that Dr. R[illegible] and I have the same initials afte[illegible] names. In this culture of selfish[illegible] and zeal for self-realization [illegible] costs, the emphasis is increasing[illegible] the individual and not the con[illegible] nity. Have we really arrived [illegible] age when surgically bifurcat[illegible] tongue for a dormantly rept[illegible] male seems to be a perfectly re[illegible] able means of allowing him to a[illegible]

Chandran Kalyanam, M.D.
Springfield, Va.

From what I read in La[illegible] Slater's article, I really admire[illegible] Rosen. As a fourteen-year-old [illegible] in 1966, in Dayton, Ohio, I [illegible] multiple piercings, painted my[illegible] nails and fingernails, and [illegible] women's chiffon nightdresses u[illegible] farmer's overalls on the street. [illegible] making a statement; I was exp[illegible] ing my individuality in a pu[illegible] cosmetic fashion to shake th[illegible] up. My rings are gone (it take[illegible] many to make an impression [illegible] more), but I continue to pain[illegible] toenails. So, although I don't [illegible] that every attempt to modify [illegible] ety's standards of beauty resul[illegible] beauty, I certainly appreciate [illegible]

Dr. Rosen has established cre[illegible] ity, applies his talent and skil[illegible] serve the afflicted, and takes th[illegible] man condition seriously, but [illegible] considered too far-out. Goo[illegible]

. The only news here is that a
rigious publication has contem
ld society's dictum:
since, with current technology,
gs wouldn't get me off the
nd, could I have a prehensile
an inch in diameter, three feet
g, with a sensitive tip, attached to
base of my spine.'

ghn Lane
cinnati

ng of Myself

was gratified by Guy Daven-
's essay on the nine volumes of
itman conversations and my
ion of selections therefrom, irk-
e though it was to be reminded
my continuing failure to track
n a copy of Volume 4 ["Endless-
talking," July]. That my radical
illation fails to capture the
e and texture" of the nine vol-
s I cheerfully acknowledge. In-
d, I warn in my introduction
; "there is no substitute for the
erience of reading all from be
ning to end."

Davenport mulls what word
itman might have used to con
the sense of that not-yet-invent-
word "homosexual" and specu-
s it was "pathic." I cannot recall
word ever being used by Whit-
n and suggest instead that the
ady code might have been
eek." Of one thing I am con-
ced: semantic minuets among
demics notwithstanding, same-
sexuality thrived in Whitman's
w York City and in his circle.
richness (and ironies) of the
e-sex ethos of Whitman's home
Mickle Street, by the way, are
ened by the recent discovery of
respondence that reveals that the
order of Whitman's conversa-
s, Horace Traubel (though mar-
and the father of two, like Os-
Wilde), had passionate affairs
two men in the decade after
itman's death.

mally, Davenport's remark that
ubel became "a newspaper edi-
and third-rate poet" after
92 scants his achievement as
founder and editor, for thirty

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NOTEBOOK

Philosopher kings

By Lewis H. Lapham

September 1, 2001

Professor Stephen Wilkes

Dear Professor Wilkes,

I appreciate your kind word about [illegible] and I take it as a compliment that you should think to send me a copy of your remarks to [illegible] on the topic "The American Public Intellectual: An Endangered Species." I don't doubt that your presentation was well-received, and I can see why you would think it "of particular interest [illegible] of darkness descending on the nation's political discourse." I admire your erudition and share your wish that both Walter Lippmann and Bernard de Voto were writing a Sunday [illegible] but I think that you carry the symposium's subtitle too far into the forests of metaphor. We are not talking about "the loss of a natural resource [illegible] aquifer," much less the "fast-disappearing [illegible] Elet." We're talking about academic careerists auditioning for the voices [illegible] le minds, and I tend to think of them as people from whom one does well [illegible] s fond of what were known at the time as "multiparticipant discussion threads," and the organizers of weekend retreats at Colonial Williamsburg and Hilton Head liked to dress up the program with topics bearing on the quality control of American public opinion—depth of meaning and degrees of importance, conditions of manufacture and terms of sale, problems presented by the repackaging of high-end political theory for downmarket distribution. Although I took careful notes and didn't neglect the portfolio of helpful study materials (readings from the works of Cicero, John Locke, George Orwell, et al.), I never learned to draw the fine distinctions between the public and the private interest—what was good for America as opposed to what was good for the panelist promoting his or her new book, on sale in the hotel lobby and coming soon to a neighborhood PBS station. I undoubtedly missed many subtle references and far-reaching ramifications, but the conference summary always seemed to me pretty straightforward:

A. The American citizenry has been reduced to a herd of lascivious sheep.

B. The herd requires guidance and [illegible]

C. Who better to provide guidance and direction than those of us here in the Sea Island Room?

D. Happily for the safety of the Republic, we're not the kind of people who covet riches or seek the glow of celebrity. We don't mind standing slightly behind the podium, imparting knowledge, pointing out the way to the just society, the best restaurants, the City on the Hill.

E. If America doesn't co[illegible] quickly to its senses, doesn't b[illegible] to read our books, how can we [illegible] fend its treasured freedoms [illegible] priceless cultural heritage ag[illegible] the devastation of C[illegible] and MTV?

I stopped going to the confere[illegible] shortly after Clinton was elected [illegible] second term, but I continue to [illegible] ceive transcripts of some of the [illegible] ceedings, and judging by your [illegible] text as well as what I read in [illegible] journals of upscale political opin[illegible] the tone and substance of the [illegible] pothesis hasn't changed much [illegible] the last ten years. The country [illegible] flounders in the morass of dum[illegible] down journalism and bad telev[illegible] (your own point about the sur[illegible] ratings for *Fear Factor*) and who [illegible] Ralph Waldo Emerson?

Maybe you could answer the [illegible] tion, Professor, but why the ho[illegible] rescue from the universities? [illegible] the universities and literary pe[illegible] tamiliar with the writing[illegible] Theodor Adorno and Louis-F[illegible] nand Céline? Why the presum[illegible] that when searching for the lost [illegible] lic intellectual, we should be p[illegible] around Harvard Square or loo[illegible] under the desks at *The New Yo*[illegible] *view of Books*?

If I read correctly your pages [illegible] through twelve, you have reas[illegible] your own to doubt the claims [illegible] academy to the throne of wi[illegible] You compare the faculty de[illegible] your acquaintance to "dead r[illegible] circling a burnt-out sun"; you [illegible] of "envious and embittered pe[illegible] preoccupied with depr[illegible] politics that they cannot see b[illegible]

narrow horizon of their little
cubicles." Not the best of circum-
ces for the restoration of the an-
t Greek agora, but your descrip-
agrees with what little I know of
ersities from my own brief obser-
ons as a guest lecturer and from
ny years of wandering in the
rt of tenured prose. When I read
books by academic authors
rming the emptiness of the pub-
quare, I seldom come away con-
ed that the country stands in
peril. I'm left instead with the
ression that the self-appointed
drums of the nation's conscience
to be consulted on matters that
ost none of them understand.

he expectation of a civic re-
kening in the literary professions
ns to me even more recklessly
placed. The joke would come
rer to you, Professor, if you could
nd some time in close confine-
nt with the New York media
wd. Everybody has a brilliant
nion; everybody can go the dis-
le of three sentences on any topic
comes into the room with the
ded movie critic or the shredded
x. Three sentences on the where-
uts of Chandra Levy, on the war
srael, free-range lettuce, cyber-
ce, the San Andreas Fault, the
ness of autumn in the Balkans. But
's it—three sentences. I'm told
in Washington the veneer on
the talking points is so thin
that it rubs off after two.

I concur in your good opinion of
n Paine, and I can understand
you assigned the last five pages
our presentation to the strenuous
inding of the conference partici-
ts of Paine's importance to the
erican Revolution. As you say,
Paine not published *Common*
se in the winter of 1776, Jefferson
months later might not have
nd either the language or the oc-
on for the writing of the Declara-
of Independence. The country
rits from Paine the boon of lib-
and I was glad to see that you
d acknowledgments of the gift
authorities as eminent as Ben-
in Franklin, George Washington,
t Whitman, and Thomas Edison.
ut you didn't mention John



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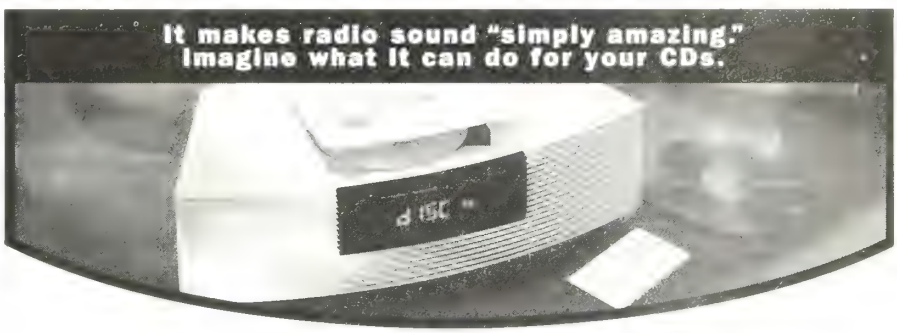
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meant to reassure President Bush, the evening's principal guest, that he was in hands as safe as those of the good people at Allstate.

It isn't that the country lacks for public intellectuals, Professor, but rather that you search for them in the wrong place. You expect to find them keeping company with John Milton and Thucydides on a bookstore shelf of Penguin Classics, or somewhere in the remote but virtuous province of C-Span, drawing diagrams of cruise missiles or stem cells in a community-college auditorium in Duluth. Look instead to the gossip columns and the supermarket press; ask around among the friends of Nicole Kidman and Sean "Puffy" Combs.

Your mistake is one in elementary grammar. Failing to grasp the proper relation between the words "public" and "intellectual," you assign too much weight to the noun, too little to the adjective. Long ago and once upon a time the display of knowledge or the proof of genius preceded the prize of fame. First write a worthwhile book and then step forward onto the stage of crowned celebrity. Now we reverse the procedure. First celebrity, then the book. Why else do you suppose that President Clinton receives $10 million to write a memoir that even his publisher knows will prove to be a long and smiling lie?

So also with every other celebrity of large magnitude. It is the fact of their success that makes them wise. Already public, they become, by definition and as a matter of commercial copyright, intellectual. We know them when we see them, not by their words or chapter headings but by their limousines and their clothes, by the crowds that attend their comings in and goings out of Spago.

Parse the phrase correctly and the country swarms with public intellectuals—Madonna speaking up for the Brazilian rain forest, Charlton Heston for the Bill of Rights; Steven Seagal unwinding the sacred scroll of Tibetan Buddhism, Tom Cruise elucidating the mystery of Scientology, Brigitte Bardot translating the secret language of dogs.

And who's to judge that what a celebrity has to say is of less con quence than what you're likely find on the editorial pages of t *Washington Post* or the *New Y Times?* Match the credentials Sting against those of George W or Thomas Friedman, and w comes to the microphone with clearer view of postmodern polit or a shrewder understanding of t global economy? The odds favor t testimony of Sting, a witness m widely traveled, considerably rich and capable of backing up his e dence with an accompaniment electric bass.

Who better to make sense what now constitutes the cultu (the living one as opposed to t one embalmed in the Library Congress) than the people who e body the expression of that cultur genius? Prior to the twentieth c tury the bulk of the world's lite ture was written by men who h played a part on the stage of pub event. You named Sophocles a Caesar, both of them military co manders; you also might have me tioned Montaigne, Bacon, Ham ton, and Churchill, all of the politicians. Why not then T Brokaw or Susan Sarandon?

Regard the human intellect a natural resource as abundant as s con or sunlight, and you can wr the story of civilization in terms the uses to which it has been p The seventeenth century was int ested in religion and so assigned clergymen the role of public intell tual; the eighteenth-century Enligh enment shifted the focus to polit and thus produced not only Jo Adams and your own Tom Paine b also Voltaire, Burke, Napoleon, t Elder and Younger Pitt. The nin teenth century promoted scienti and novelists to the ranks of high consciousness; our own age choos to nominate synonyms for money important movie stars, wealthy bu nessmen, musicians in heavy fur.

History grossly simplified. Prof sor, but I trust you to take the abb viated point. Times change, and does the costume of the Philosoph King. Education doesn't figure in t job description. The five speakers your symposium brought with th

collective holding of twenty
e college degrees, and I'm sure
every one of them can spot the
erence between a Beethoven pi-
sonata and one of Picasso's
vns. Spot it almost every time,
bet, the identification confirmed
left references to Chartres Cathe-
and the last Hapsburg. Solid
f, Professor, but to what avail?
say that next year's conference
address "The Dilemma of the
ative Mind," and who do you
nt to see on the stage—the same
curators of the liberal-arts muse-
or the lead guitarist for Radio-
d?

t's not your fault. The loss that
describe has been with us for
years, and maybe it will hearten
to know that others have looked
the same abyss. Writing a letter
his British publisher in 1949,
ymond Chandler, the author of
Big Sleep and *The Long Goodbye*,
it as follows:

> You can't produce art by trying, by
> setting up exacting standards, by talk-
> ing about critical minutiae, by the
> Flaubert method. It is produced with
> great ease, in an almost offhand man-
> ner, and without self consciousness.
> You can't write just because you have
> read all the books.

Or the critic Dwight Macdonald
looking into *Life* magazine in
0:

> Nine color pages of Renoir paint-
> ings followed by a picture of a roller-
> skating horse. . . . Just think, nine
> pages of Renoirs! But that roller-skat-
> ing horse comes along, and the final
> impression is that Renoir is talented,
> but so is the horse.

For Chandler's word "art" substitute
blic intellectual"; for Macdonald's
rse substitute Warren Beatty and
re you have an ending for your
lancholy rhyme. Fortunately we
n't live in times that try men's souls.
ine's rhetoric carried a ragged and
rving army through a hard winter at
lley Forge; our own Washington
llet company takes up positions, *de-*
ors composite and *port de bras* pleasing to
e wives of warm and well-fed oil-
mpany lobbyists. Count your bless-
rs, Professor; be glad that in Santa
iz it doesn't snow. ■

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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of "weapons of mass destruction" allowed in space, according to a 1967 treaty ratified by [illegible]
Number of abstentions to reaffirming the treaty last year besides those of the United States, Israel, and Micronesia: [illegible]
Number of "kills" a U.S. Air Force report anticipates achieving with space-based lasers in the future: "very many"
rcentage of Americans who say Israel and the Arab nations will never "be able to settle their differences and live in peace": 64
ercentage of Russian nuclear scientists who say they are willing to work on another country's missile-defense program: 21
Minimum number of nations currently targeted by the United States' integrated nuclear-war plan: 5
Percentage change in the incidence of worker contamination at Los Alamos labs between 1993 and 1995: +76
Chances that an accident there in 1994 resulted in a "loss of control of radioactive material": 2 in 3
Chance that an accident resulted in a "loss of control of classified matter": 1 in 20
Number of staff members fired from New York's nonprofit WBAI-FM since December and banned from its premises: 12
Number of surveillance cameras installed at WBAI's studios in May to monitor remaining employees: 8
umber of network-TV dramas scheduled this fall whose protagonists are employed in law enforcement or the legal system: 17
Chances that an American believes that the First Amendment "goes too far" in guaranteeing rights: 2 in 5
Chance that an American believed this last year: 1 in 5
Number of people arrested at last year's Republican National Convention: 390
Number arrested at July's G-8 summit in Genoa, Italy: 298
Number of "useless laws" that Italy's new prime minister promised to eliminate if elected: 60,000
Chances that a state execution carried out last year took place in China: 7 in 10
Chance that the death of a pregnant Nepalese is the result of an unsafe abortion: 1 in 2
Ratio of the death rate among pregnant women in Nepal to the rate for pregnant women worldwide: 2:1
Number of "trouser accidents" requiring hospital treatment in Britain in 1999: 5,945 (see page 22)
Minimum number of garden gnomes relocated to the forest since 1996 by France's Garden Gnome Liberation Front: 6,000
Estimated number of mink released from a Spanish fur farm in July by unidentified activists: 13,000
Minimum number of plant species that can be found only in Colombia: 15,000
Ratio of acres of Colombia sprayed with defoliants last year to acres of Vietnam sprayed with Agent Orange in 1964: 3:2
Ratio of Oregon rainfall in April 2000 to rainfall last April after a Native American tribe held a rain ceremony there: 2:3
Amount the tribe subsequently billed an Oregon power company for costs associated with the ceremony: $32,000
Percentage of his presidency that George W. Bush has spent at or en route to vacation spots: 42
mount of campaign contributions that Sen. James Jeffords has returned since leaving the Republican Party in May: $17,470
Estimated amount of new contributions he has received since then: $45,000
Amount the Treasury Department will borrow this year to pay for the tax refund: $51,000,000,000
Amount it had projected spending to service U.S. debt this year, before the tax bill passed: $57,000,000,000
Maximum domestic damages at which a U.S. law caps U.S. liability for a nuclear accident in space: $9,500,000,000
Maximum total foreign damages at which the same law caps U.S. liability for such an accident: $100,000,000
Maximum reparation per survivor of Nazi slave-labor camps won in a class-action lawsuit settled last May: $7,038
Average amount in legal fees each of the winning lawyers will receive: $1,089,325
Spending money that Slobodan Milosevic can earn per day for laundry duty at the U.N. prison at The Hague: $2
Amount Romania plans to spend by 2003 to build a Count Dracula theme park: $20,000,000
Number of George W. Bush Halloween masks sold nationwide last year by a New York distributor: 15,811
Number of Al Gore masks sold: 15,739

Figures cited have been adjusted for inflation and are the latest available as of August 2001. Sources are listed on page 96.
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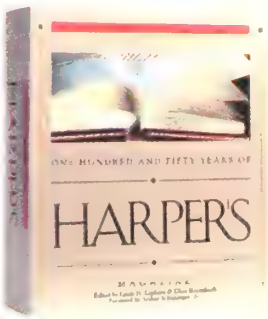
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READINGS

UNDERSTANDING
OVATION

D

A

especially enthused spectators will leap to their feet only to find that no one is joining them. Far more common, however, is the tediously predictable and subtly tyrannical progression from a few isolated standers to scattered perpendicular patches and clumps that spread steadily outward, until finally even the most tepid of spectators feels obliged to join in the general uprightness.

Why are standing ovations so coercive? Perhaps because once they achieve a certain critical mass anyone who stays seated feels like a spoilsport. Your dissent becomes painfully obvious in a way it never does when you simply aren't clapping as loudly as everyone else. Indeed to keep one's seat in the midst of a wildfire standing ovation seems to convey a distinctly negative judgment rather than a merely less positive one. However loudly you may clap, cheer, whistle, your very failure to stand acts as the equivalent of a boo, a thumbs-down, a churlish withholding of enthusiasm. The sad truth is that standing

the value of its monetary and aesthetic investment.

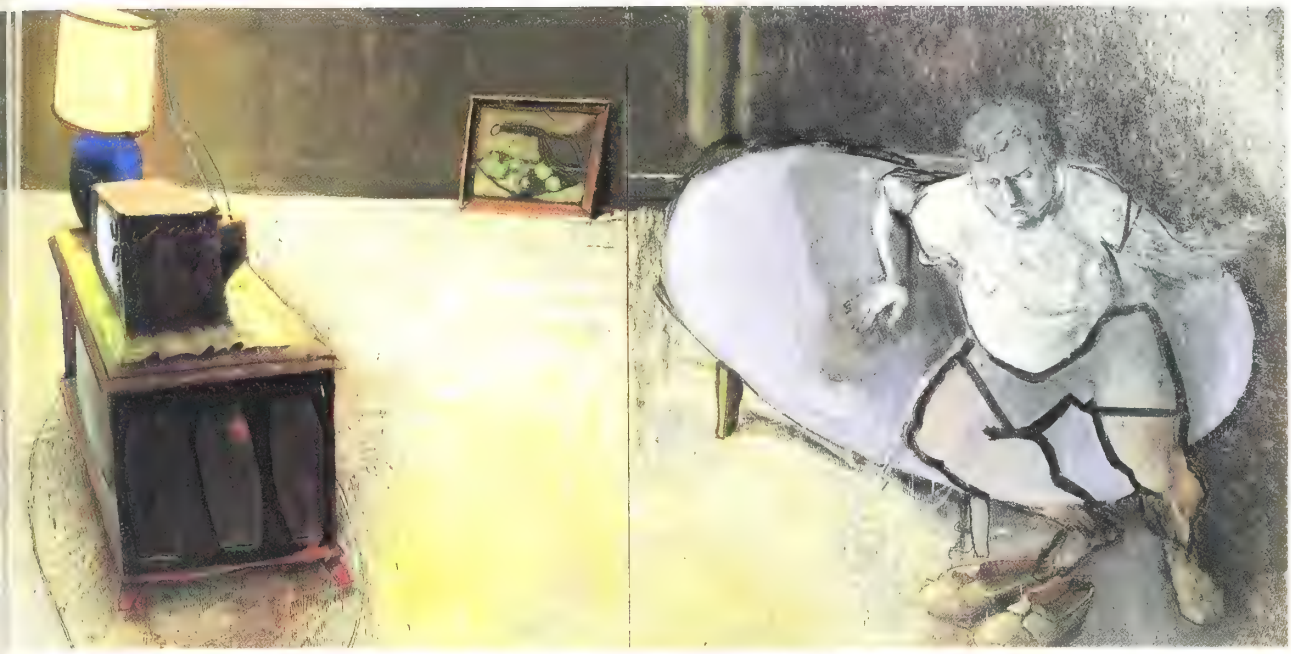
"The poem is the cry of its occasion," Wallace Stevens proclaimed, and the same might be said of applause. No two ovations sound exactly the same: the dynamics of applause vary broadly depending on the kind of event it greets or rewards. Indeed our assumptions about what and when to applaud turn out to be surprisingly arbitrary. As Frederick Stocken points out in an article for the *BBC Music Magazine*, "Because applause seems so natural to us, we tend to assume that its methods and conventions have remained constant throughout history." Not so; Stocken proceeds to list some of the more significant variations in the practice, beginning with Nero's insistence on being applauded by the "Alexandrian" method, a blend of hollow-handed and flat-handed clapping overlaid with loud humming. Less exotic are more recent customs such as applauding between movements of extended works, which became obsolete only in the twentieth century (though not in the opera house, where it's still kosher to applaud big arias). Stocken notes that in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it was even customary to applaud specific moments within a piece—e.g., a fortissimo passage or a brilliant cadenza. In the pious atmosphere of the modern concert hall, such behavior would be considered criminal. To applaud before the final note has sounded feels like a violation of the integrity of the Work. This assumption is no doubt as arbitrary as any other, but it reflects a basic shift in the way we understand and respond to musical performances.

SONGS FROM THE WOODS

There, in Sherwood Forest, lived 10,201 people. Everyone had a mate except the priest. Each person had written a song. Singing was

ng was sung to that person by some

oneself. The priest sang to each person the song written by that person's mate, and, having no



s tgation, by David Hendy will be shown in January at Hackett Freedman Gallery in San Francisco

Of course not all music gets the same treatment. Jazz aficionados routinely applaud after solos, reflecting not only the special recognition due improvisers but the more paratactic grammar of jazz, in which the coherence of the whole is often less compelling than the intensity of the parts. But here an interesting dilemma can arise: the more enthusiastically one applauds the last soloist, the less one hears of the next. Applause becomes a kind of feedback, entering into and distorting the performance itself, in some instances leading the soloist to play deliberately "throwaway" passages knowing that they won't be heard.

Applause often satisfies a need or appetite as profound as the appetite for the aesthetic experience that elicits it. In its simplest form the law of stimulus and response dictates that when we feel something we must do something, and applause is the place where that doing first takes on an irreducibly aesthetic form. Applauding for a good performance can itself be a pleasure of the highest order. Anticipating a trip to see the famous actress Berma, Proust's Marcel compares himself to a "battery that accumulates and stores up electricity," nicely capturing the temporal character of aesthetic experience generally. We take in stimuli and store them, letting them build in pressure until they eventually demand to be released. The sexual analogue is inescapable; if art produces a kind of pleasurable friction or excitation, then applause is the orgasmic discharge that dispels the accumulated tension. (Other forms of bodily relief may also be apposite; consider the phrase "Hold your applause," with its faint evocation of a full bladder.) Traditionally, catharsis or emotional release has been located within the bounds of the aesthetic experience proper—at the denouement of a tragedy, or in the harmonic resolution of a symphony. Yet in a real sense the process has not been completed, the gathered energy spent, until mind and body have been able to expel something commensurate with what they have absorbed. "Dazzling and tremendous, how quick the sunrise would kill me," chants Whitman, "If I could not now and always send sunrise out of me."

One reason applause can be deeply satisfying is that it confirms the deep-seated intuition that our own aesthetic responses are not simply perverse or idiosyncratic but find an answering chord in other minds. As individual handclaps merge into a homogeneous roar, so the separate responses of audience members merge into what feels like a shared judgment, a consensus. Applause is a great leveler, averaging particular responses into a single measurable quantity. What happens to the individual in the crowd? Where do his claps go? Even the applauder usually can't distinguish her own noise from that of her fellows. Yet each person claps at a slightly different rhythm, pace, pitch, volume. In this respect applause is less like a chorus

[Remonstrance]

SCREW U.

From a proposal for a resolution passed last fall by the Penn State University faculty senate, after the university's football team lost five of its first eight

Given the outstanding reputation of Penn State athletics and its long tradition of treating opposing teams and fans with respect, it is disconcerting to hear the loud chorus of boos now coming from all quarters of the stadium when

odd to hear such tasteless cheers as "bullshit" when fans do not like an official's call, and even more unfortunate to see such commentaries be

OBJECTIVES

To effect at least modest improvements in these areas of fan behavior, we resolve to:

Work with the head cheerleader and cheerleading squad to improve fan behavior, particularly cheering in the student section.

- reduce or eliminate negative cheering
- reduce or eliminate tasteless cheers
- increase positive cheering
- increase sense of responsibility for opponents (e.g., no cheering when injured player leaves field)
- read a statement shortly before the opposing team steps on the field at each home

Relatively noninvasive (short statements, mod-

Proactive; could have ripple effect across the

Timely (ethics in big-time sports now under

Appeals to persons' positive instincts, not preachy or moralistic

Easier to do at start of season before patterns

May be too much ethics on top of the NCAA

May have no effect, will be wasted effort

Perhaps effort should be directed to more seri-

Could backfire. Some fans, for example, could react by booing more loudly.



[Feature]

DANCER IN THE DARK

[illegible] McGrath, owner of the Pussycat Club in East Sussex, England, to the director of Environment and Housing of the Brighton and Hove City Council

[illegible]

As you are aware, we are presently licensed as a Sex Club in Sussex [illegible] Public Entertainment License specific to striptease, and that license quite correctly prohibits physical contact between a customer and a dancer, other than the placing of notes into a dancer's garter. I write to seek your opinion as to whether you would consider a variation to this condition for regis-

[illegible] them and designated a staff member to each to assist them entering, moving around the Club, and leaving. Finally, we made the dancers aware of [illegible]

Both blind gentlemen enjoyed a number of [illegible] proximity of the dancers and in particular en[illegible] touch, and the dancers politely refused them.

They pursued their request with me, then [illegible]


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istered blind persons only, and only with the

ake the matter up with the licensing authori-

e fifteen dancers consulted would possi- agree to controlled touching in special circumstances. The consensus among the eleven was that any touching should be voluntary, restricted to the breasts, and should occur only when the dancer is wearing a bra (i.e., not topless). Furthermore, it would be acceptable only where the dancer had full control, and the proposal is that she would take one hand/arm of the blind customer and place it on her breast(s), whilst dancing, for an agreed time.

There was much hilarity during this discussion (comparisons made to the nature of Braille

quiry to you is a serious one.

Could you please give me an indication of your thoughts on this difficult matter?

Kenneth McGrath

SLACKS ATTACKS

by the Department of Trade and Industry in Lon-

Getting undressed, caught trousers in shoe, slipped, and fell down stairs

Patient was lying on bed with hand in jeans, his wife came and pushed him off the bed, hit

Caught his foot in his rather large jeans as he came down the stairs, fell down approx 10 steps

some on his trousers, went to a friend's house,

Getting dressed this morning, as he was putting on his jeans, caught it and ripped off part of

Patient had been drinking, came home, father heard a bang, found patient on the floor, had hit head on wall trying to get his trousers off

Rushing downstairs to rescue the shepherd's pie cooking in kitchen, foot caught in wide leg of trousers, fell whole flight to hall floor, landed

Dismounting from a horse, caught scrotum on stirrup, went through jogging trousers and underpants

Patient playing football, fell and cut his leg on poppers of tracksuit bottoms

Playing on pavement outside house, trying to be Sporty Spice, doing a high kick, fell onto kneecap on road surface

Injury to finger picking fluff off trousers, heard a crack

Bent down to pick up a lighter, trousers caught fire, burning shin

Patient caught penis in zip

Patient ironed trousers whilst still wearing them

Putting on jeans in bathroom, caught finger,

Dancing in bedroom, caught finger in pocket of jeans

Fell at home, struck head on wall as she fell, tried to get up again, slipped on bottom of trousers, fell again, hitting head on floor

Fell backward while taking trousers off

Walking with one hand in back pocket, tripped on pavement and fell onto face

Skin of penis caught in trouser zip, foreskin firmly caught

Scraping wax off trousers with a knife, cut leg

Gluing son's toy together with ultra-bond superglue. Tube of glue burst, patient glued ring onto finger and trousers to leg

Taking jeans off and suddenly heard snapping in hand, patient not very interested in giving

Putting on jeans that are too tight, tried to pull legs down by hooking fingers in hem, and fin-

In shopping-center toilets, smoking cigarette, threw it into toilet, which ignited and burnt

Cycling, wind blew trousers into sprocket, fell off onto pavement

Rainstorm with hands in pockets. Arrived at [illegible] tripped and fell on concrete surface [illegible]

Visiting hospital and trapped penis in zip of trousers, foreskin stuck on trouser zip

Strolling along country park with hands in pockets, tripped over a stone and could not put hands out to break fall, fell face forward onto gravel path

[Tales]

CHANGS AND WRENS

From an essay by Eliot Weinberger in the Summer issue of Tin House. *Weinberger's most recent book is* Karmic Traces, *a collection of essays published by* New Directions.

CHANG CHIH-HO, in the eighth century, lost his post under the Emperor and retreated to the mountains. He devoted himself to fishing, but never used any bait, for his object was not to catch fish.

CHANG TSAI, in the third century, was Secretary to the Heir Apparent. His ugliness was so extreme that children pelted him with stones whenever he went outside.

CHANG CHIO, in the second century, called himself the Yellow God and led an army of 360,000 followers, all wearing yellow turbans. They brought down the Han Dynasty.

CHANG CHAO, one of the Five Men of Letters, fell off his horse in the eighteenth century, but impressed the Emperor by continuing to write poems with his left hand.

CHANG CHEN-CHOU, in the eighth century, was known for his unmatched honesty. Upon being appointed Governor of Shuchou, he held a banquet for all his friends and relatives, gave them lavish gifts of silk and cash, and then, tears in his eyes, told them that from now on he could never see them again.

CHANG SENG-YU, in the sixth century, painted a pair of dragons without eyes on the Temple of Peace and Joy, and warned that the painting should never be completed. A skeptic filled in the eyes, and the walls of the temple crashed to ruins as the dragons flew off.

CHANG CHUNG, in the fourteenth century, was a philosopher who roamed the mountains wildly and always wore an iron cap.

CHANG CH'IEN, in the second century B.C.E., was captured in Bactria and held prisoner for 13 years before escaping to Fergana. From there he brought back the first walnuts and cultivated grapes, knotty bamboo and hemp, and the art of making wine. His travels were such that it was believed he had found the source of the Yellow River, which flows down from the Milky Way. After traveling for many months upstream, he came to a city where he saw a young man leading an ox to water and a young woman spinning. He asked what place this was, and the girl gave him a shuttle and told him to show it to the noted astronomer Yen Chun-p'ing. Upon his return, the astronomer recognized the shuttle as belonging to the Spinning Damsel, the constellation Lyra, and said that he had noticed, at the exact moment Chang had entered the strange city, an errant star crossing between the Spinning Damsel and the Oxherding Boy.

CHANG CH'AO, in the seventeenth century, said: "Flowers must have butterflies, mountains must have streams, rocks must have moss, the ocean must have seaweed, old trees must have creepers, and people must have obsessions."

[illegible], a scholar and governor in the first century B.C.E., was in the habit of personally painting his wife's eyebrows. When the Emperor asked him why, Chang replied that women consider eyebrows to be of the highest importance.

[illegible]

CHANG CHIH-HO, in the eleventh century, could [illegible] and then return to their hands.

CHANG CHU, a poet in the thirteenth century, wrote a line, "The cataclysm of red sheep," that no one has ever been able to explain.

CHANG HSI-CHENG, a Taoist, no one remembers [illegible]

CHANG JEN-HSI, in the eighteenth century, wrote a treatise on ink.

CHANG LI-HUA, in the sixth century, was the Emperor's favorite concubine and renowned for the beauty of her hair, which was seven feet long.

CHANG JUNG, a poet in the fifth century, was given a fan made of white egret feathers by a Taoist priest, who told him that strange things should be given to strange people. The Emperor said that the kingdom couldn't stand to be without one man like Chang Jung and couldn't stand to be with two.

CHANG HSUN held out bravely in the siege of Suiyang in 756 and, as supplies and food ran short,



visible and drinking poison, but he refused to have his portrait placed in the Hall of Worthies.

CHANG HENG, in the second century, wrote an encyclopedia of miscellaneous information. CHANG KUEI, in the same century, could raise fogs.

CHANG YING, in the seventeenth century, was the official Reader to the Emperor.

CHANG TSE, in the seventh century, was too critical and always getting into trouble, but it was said that his essays were like a thousand pieces of gold chosen from a thousand pieces of gold. This meant that they were all precious.

CHANG YEN-YUAN, in the sixteenth century, could never pass the examinations, as he thought only about antiques. Fortunately, he became a connoisseur.

When CHANG SHAO died, sometime in the Han Dynasty, he appeared to his best friend, Fan Shih, in a dream. Fan immediately set out for the fu-

net il, many provinces away. For weeks no one was able to bury Chang's coffin, until Lu, to do it, a white horse, dressed in mourning.

CHANG HUANG-YEN, the last supporter of the Ming Dynasty in the seventeenth century, retreated to a barren island, where he trained apes to warn him of an enemy approach.

CHANG TSAO, in the ninth century, would paint trees simultaneously using his finger and a worn stump of a brush—one for the living matter, the other for the dead branches and fallen leaves.

CHANG HUA, in the third century, wrote a famous rhapsody or rhymed prose poem (*fu*) on the wren: The wren is a tiny bird. It eats only a few grains; it makes its nest on a single branch; it can only fly a few feet; it takes up little space and does no harm. Its feathers are drab; it is useless to human kind, but it too receives the force of life. Ducks and geese can fly up to the clouds, yet they are shot down with arrows, for their flesh is plump. Kingfishers and peacocks must die because their feathers are beautiful. The falcon is fierce, but is kept on a tether; the parrot is intelligent, but is locked in a cage, where it is forced to repeat its master's words. Only the little wren, worthless and unlovely, is free.

[Collection]

SPEAK, MEMORY

The following recollections appear on the website of San Francisco's Exploratorium museum, which asked visitors to describe their earliest memories.

This one time, my sister Danielle squeezed my head and it hurt really bad.

I was in the hospital and they put the IV in wrong and my blood squirted out. I was one. Right now I'm thirteen.

I ate rat poison when I was three. The powdered kind. I thought it was fun dip.

When I went to kindergarten I cried because I wanted to wear a dress instead of pants.

A girl bent down on her knees to talk to me. I remember that I didn't like her getting so close.

Playing in the smoke rings of my grandfather's cigarettes.

Resting my head on the school-bus window as it caused my head to vibrate and bounce lightly on the window when I was four.

Running up a small hill in my ballerina dress.

I broke [illegible]

I [illegible] to make my mom sad.

My twin sister and I painted the toilet bowl with red paint.

Our dog bit me, so I bit her back.

The first time I served as an altar boy I wet my pants under the cassock. I was in second grade.

I remember when my brother was eleven and I was four. It was his birthday. He puked on me.

My mother wouldn't let me eat fried chicken in preschool.

My brother made me swallow pennies because he said it would make me worth more to our parents.

Getting drunk with Brando Fiorini and crashing a stolen car into the police station.

Sticking peas up my nose, and loving it!

I ate glue to impress friends.

I went to Disneyland and Mickey Mouse touched my head. I felt funny. I was four years old.

My earliest memory is when I pooped in the swimming pool and my brother had to swim to the bottom to pick it up.

Being hit on the head with a brick.

Nightmares of dust bunnies.

[Interview]

A NUT AND HIS SQUIRRELS

From an interview with Bernhard Goetz, a candidate [illegible] tried to solicit $5 from him. Goetz's platform includes "a more tolerant drug policy," "experimental programs with power naps for city workers," and a promise to appoint the current mayor, [illegible] Anna Holmes, appeared in the August 6 issue of the New York [illegible]

[illegible] *website*]: Is that your squirrel?

BERNHARD GOETZ: No, that was a wild squirrel.

HOLMES: They let you pick them up?

WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE

[illegible] in Wilmington, California. Ibarra [illegible] students to write about their experiences [illegible]

I saw a rat alive on a trap with his stomach cut [illegible] THE JANITOR HAD TO TAKE THE RATS OUT.

I saw a rat in my classroom. It was big and [illegible] Sierra's shoes. I saw it by the trash. I saw it in the cabinets. It was on the floor. It made a hole. I saw a rat. It was a big fat rat. I saw the fat rat dead. It made a hole by the trash. I saw blood by the dead rat. There were [illegible]

I saw a rat in my classroom. I was in room 28. It was running around the classroom closet. I saw another one that was dead. One was small and the other one was big. I saw a rat [illegible] The smell was nasty. The smell made me sick to my stomach.

I saw many rats in the classroom. They had all of Mr. Ibarra's paper and books. They went to the bathroom all over the classroom and the room smelled very bad. I saw them crawl around the room and one went by the backpacks and one crawled over Sierra's foot. She [illegible]

Last week there were nine rats. My friend [illegible] couldn't breathe. I saw feces in the closet and also some by the trap. It was sick. Mr. Ibarra couldn't breathe while he was reading because of the dead smell. There was a rat by Sierra's foot.

I saw a mouse in my classroom near the back[illegible] the room was disgusting. I saw the rats' feces all over the room. Then we went to lunch. It made me sick to my stomach and gave me a headache. [illegible] I lived outside for 59 minutes and then we went [illegible] and after that we lined up for lunch. Then we went to P.E. and then we went home.

GOETZ: No, I uh— It was very sick, so I held out a nut and I grabbed it.

[illegible]

GOETZ: It had a big infection on the side of its [illegible]

HOLMES: When did you get into squirrels?

GOETZ: About three years ago my chinchilla died, and I wound up getting a couple of squirrels and, uh, they're wonderful pets. They are loving, gentle, clean pets.

HOLMES: Some people think they're just rats with big tails.

GOETZ: If that's true, then people are monkeys.

HOLMES: Where did you get the ones you had as pets?

GOETZ: Oh, there's excess squirrels around. There's excess— There's always an excess of squirrels available. In the city, in the parks.

HOLMES: So you took wild squirrels then.

GOETZ: Uh-huh.

HOLMES: And they didn't try to bite you and freak out?

GOETZ: Sure, wild squirrels will try to bite you. But if you get them as babies then they don't. Sometimes the adults take very well to apartment living, and the females are tamer.

HOLMES: What do you feed them?

GOETZ: It's crucial if you have a baby pet squirrel that you have to feed it Esbilac.

HOLMES: What's that?

GOETZ: That's puppy milk. They won't survive unless you give them Esbilac. Okay, and what you do is when you get it, it's rather expensive and a squirrel only has a little bit a day. And it goes bad. So what you do is, you pour it into an ice-cube tray and make maybe a dozen ice cubes, and every time you need it, you pop an ice cube out, put it in a little plastic dish in the microwave, and then— Baby squirrels, what I also like to feed them is natural applesauce with honey mixed in it. And when they're older they like, they like, uh, all kinds of nuts. Avocado—um, grapes, cherries. Uh, broccoli, raw broccoli.

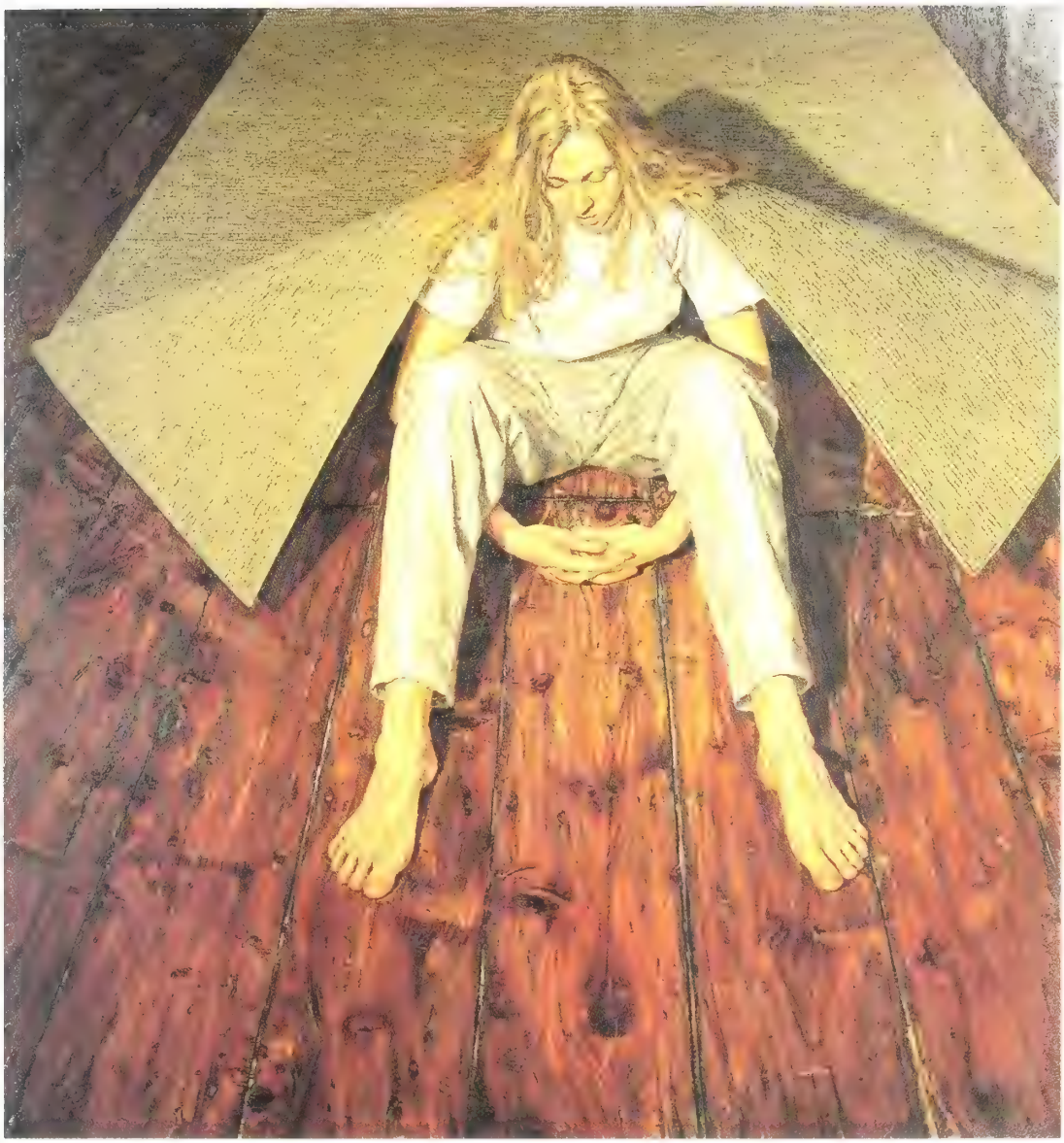
[illegible]

GOETZ: And they like spaghetti if you have natural spaghetti with good spaghetti sauce.

HOLMES: They don't like just the spaghetti, [illegible]

GOETZ: With the sauce, definitely. I only buy Barilla spaghetti sauce with mushroom and garlic. I sometimes have to run into the bathroom, because, um, the squirrel, he loves it, and he makes a big mess because he [illegible] all over the place and on me with his spaghetti paws. It's a big cleanup problem.

HOLMES: So he likes the mushroom and garlic.



Wanted: *by Chr. Smith 'Smith' to it will be a play text [illegible]*

GOETZ: Yeah.

HOLMES: Do they, do they kind of slurp it up like humans do, or do they munch on it?

GOETZ: They hold it in their two paws and then it slowly disappears into their mouth. They get a piece of mushroom with spaghetti sauce on it, and they eat that.

HOLMES: What kind of noodles do they prefer?

GOETZ: I use good noodles, either Barilla fine noodles or, what's that Japanese one, the expensive one? Soba. Also, I forgot to mention, squirrels like fresh corn.

HOLMES: So how many do you have with you now as pets?

GOETZ: I only have one right now. He came from a homeless man in Washington Square Park who saved [illegible] up this man's leg, and he slept overnight in the homeless man's jacket, and then I got him the next day.

HOLMES: Are you going to keep him?

GOETZ: I do [illegible] rel. Right now he's grabbing my hand and he squeezes it real hard. He likes being [illegible]

HOLMES: What do they like to do? Are they like [illegible]

GOETZ: It depends on the squirrel. This guy here right now? Basically he jumps on you and you squeeze him and he runs away and

…back and … scratches your hand and you …

… feet

… a squirrel

… New York …

… squirrel, you can …

… and eat it, but …re not allowed to take it home and take …e of it.

…: What is their reasoning?

…: I'll tell you the reasoning: Some people believe the world is flat.

… get them at pet stores.

GOETZ: Well, in some states, sure. I'm sure you could buy them in Pennsylvania, for example, but in Pennsylvania you can buy, you know, anything.

HOLMES: What kind of nuts do they like? Every type of nut?

GOETZ: Hazelnuts tend to be their favorite, and … they like acorns.

HOLMES: How do they feel about peanuts?

GOETZ: Sure, they'll eat unsalted, raw peanuts. But they would prefer hazelnuts.

HOLMES: And how many could a squirrel consume before getting full?

GOETZ: Five.

HOLMES: How long did you have your chinchilla for?

… I had her for six years. I got her as an … I don't know how old she was when I …

HOLMES: Squirrels or chinchillas?

… That's like saying, Blondes or brunettes? … Both. It depends on the squirrel. It depends on the chinchilla.

NOTES ON EMPHYSEMA

By Hayden Carruth, in the Winter issue of The … *Writers' appeared in the November 1999 issue of* Harper's Magazine. *His most recent book of …*

1. Smudgie, my beautiful white cat, lies curled on the bed beside me. She doesn't know she's …

☒

2. At the beginning of the instant of oxygen deprivation, as when one exhales as far as one strenuously can and the lungs ache, a diminutive twitch and tingle are felt in the little finger of each hand, as if it were a mild electric shock. The brain sends out its small distress signal. You had better pay attention.

☒

3. Breathing is called an autonomic activity, and of course it is. Like the cat, a child doesn't know it's breathing. Yet sometimes in the duress you come to know too well you must concentrate every consciousness you have on …e more breath.

☒

4. Climb the stairs. Lie down. Stare at the water stain on the ceiling, at utter familiarity. Slow your heart and still the gasping. Gradually, gradually. Notice the rise and fall of your diaphragm, the diminishing pressure against your stomach. After five minutes take one deep breath. A great exhaustive sigh. Now fall asleep.

☒

5. The messy condensation inside the oxygen mask makes you think of a suckling infant. All that moistness on the brink of suffocation.

☒

6. After walking up to the brush pile with a handful of winter twigs and small branches, do not catch your breath standing up. Fall to the ground. The grass. Turn on your back and cover your eyes with your arm. Open your mouth wide. Try not to choke.

☒

7. When you increase your use of the medicated inhalers to three times a day, four times a day, commit yourself to the pain of knowing that this will not help you.

☒

8. Commit yourself to pain.

☒

9. Remember frequently what you have read, heard, and seen on film. The end will be a Plasticine tent in a white room. Vague faces, unintelligible voices. The thump and rasp of the breathing machine, like a pile driver beside your head. A little fire of burning tinder in the bottom of your throat.

☒

10. How alone can you get?

☒

11. "Now I am dying. Now. I am afraid. Please give me a cigarette."

☒

12. The X-ray shows nothing. A diseased alveolus looks the same as a healthy one. But the doctor can tell anyway, because the lungs grow grotesquely upward, squeezing into the collarbones, in order to get more air. The whole lungs, top to bottom, will no longer fit on an X-ray plate.

13. See the basketball player. Sprewell of the Knicks, for instance. Whirling like a tempest from one end of the court to the other and back again, never ceasing, and then the shots, the layups, baseline jumpers, perimeter bombs, and the steals, the breakaways, dazzling, all magical and dazzling. But the really remarkable thing is how that man can breathe.



14. Learning to cough. Not the shallow, sharp spasm of earlier years. It must come from a deep place, as deep as you can get. Let it be slow, somewhat prolonged, yet very vigorous, a great huff, like blowing out many candles. Mouth wide open, trying not to wheeze. Bring up that awful, heavy clot of phlegm. Put it in a tissue. Examine it carefully for signs of blood.



15. The endless questions. Why do you smoke? Is it addiction to nicotine? Clearly not. What did nicotine ever do for you? Nothing, nothing at all. There is a difference, an important difference, between addiction and compulsion, no matter what the doctors and other innocents may think. Emphasize this. But where does the compulsion come from? From far in the back of the cave where the firelight doesn't reach and you are a boy alone. And why is it so strong? That's obvious. Because it saved your life.



16. Often of a summer evening one feels a chill, a shiver. Is it the dreaded virus? The virus which is nemesis for emphysema, especially when the emphysema is combined with chronic bronchitis, as it usually is. A touch of pneumonia can bring on the ultimate misery in no time. Ultimate, meaning what it means. Take aspirin, take whiskey. Go to bed, snuggle down, try to sleep in spite of a raging brain. Hope the chill is only an old man's fragility. Hope for the best.



17. If you look in a mirror and see the lineaments of hope, smash the mirror. That's what Paul said, long ago.



18. Is the emphysema more deranged than the other demons who have dwelt in one's being from the start? Probably not. But it does have a material presence [illegible] more power.



19. Good morning, emphysema. Good afternoon. Good night. Did you have a good day?



20. Remember what it meant to "take a walk"? Along the brook, through the hemlocks and spruces, around the bog, across the goldenrod and hardhack to the bank of fireweed, under the knoll where the purple-fringed orchis grew, wandering the hardwoods with the squirrels and ovenbirds scolding, up to the top of Marshall's big rock? Breathing the clean air?

21. You can't budge? Unh. Is it the emphysema? You bet. What does it do? Gives me the granddaddy of all depressions. What can I do? Give me a cigarette and go away.



22. Would you like something to drink? Thanks. I'll have a little Kentucky cyanide.



23. First thing in the morning you can breathe—a little—and you can move—a little. It hurts. Five-thirty [illegible] with gray light at the window, probably another day is beginning. Yeah. But man, like who gives a rat's ass?



24. He would like to see his son, say a few words, hear his voice, touch him on the shoulder, he would like this more than any words could say in any language. But the boy lives five hundred yards up the hill.

25. Choking and gasping in the night. The woman comes, the beloved [illegible] constant, beautiful, and smart. But no one is smart enough to know what to do about this. Moments of overwhelming mutual disappointment.

26. When friends come you sit immobile, smiling, breathing quietly, the way the Buddha sat. But everyone is aware of the difference.

27. The Angelus [illegible] what it means, being resolute in unchurchliness. But the word has such a pleasant sound. One would like to go to sleep by—at, on, with—the Angelus. And perhaps never wake up.



28. After all, which means after a very great deal, perhaps a Catholic hospital would be



next Christmas, or possibly even the Christmas after that. The change of seasons is no more than a change of wallpaper now.

31. You reflect that emphysema affords one benefit after all. Your whole life you've suffered from acute acrophobia, sometimes dangerously. Jump, jump, the demon shouted, when you stood at the top of the precipice on Capri. But now you can't climb high enough for the vertigo to set in. No doubt there are others.

32. When did one draw one's last normal breath? Probably in sleep. When it did no good. Otherwise every breath, even in repose, is taken too quickly and expelled too forcibly, often

through half pursed lips. As if you were trying to whistle long after you'd forgotten how.

☒

33. What is a lung? Well, now that you ask, a lung is a sponge. And you know what happens to your kitchen sponge after you've used it a couple of years.

☒

34. The computer doesn't breathe, but sometimes it sighs. Especially when you turn it off.

☒

35. "Get rid of the gasper. Why don't you smoke one of those fine cigars from Philadelphia?" "Why don't you mind your own fucking business?"

☒

36. The beginning. The ending. Inexorable. You used to think disacquiescence was a virtue that somehow lent dignity and integrity to human consciousness caught in the bind of essential injustice. Why not now? Well, that's the kind of an idea one had during the middle.

☒

37. You have two inhalers, called "puffers" in the trade, which for two years you've been using as prescribed, two inhalations of each twice a day. You use an air chamber so that the maximum amount of medicine will reach your lungs. After each puff you hold the medicated mist in your lungs for thirty seconds if you can, though you probably can't: in mid-case emphysema twenty seconds would be more realistic. Between puffs you exhale until you're on the brink of fainting, in order to clear out as much of the smoke and stale air as possible. The whole process takes twelve minutes, morning and night, and produces no noticeable effect. On the other hand, if you neglect the puffers for a day you become aware of increased pain and greater shortness of breath. The strange thing is that even though this exercise is directly related to your hope of staying alive, it becomes a colossal bore. You have to flog yourself to it every morning and night. Is it that staying alive is something of a bore, too? In addition you have a third puffer for use in emergencies, more powerful and with more evident side effects. You use it just before you dial 911.

☒

38. Ten times a day: "Why don't you quit smoking?" One has no hope of penetrating the so-called minds of these people. Talk about exclusion! Talk about discrimination!

☒

39. He is a professional. He has read at least ten poems a day for sixty years—that's 220,000 poems and probably a lot more. Not one of them was about breathing.

☒

40. Do not hold your breath when doing something difficult, such as walking quietly in order not to disturb the sleeper or scraping the old inspection decal off your windshield. It seems to be a natural human practice, but it isn't necessary and it only makes matters worse.

☒

41. According to Victorian Marxist Historicism, the Hebrews had only one god, whose sole function was to take upon himself all the ills of the people. But it's hard to imagine a divine person with emphysema.

☒

42. Even so you relish what you still can do. You heave the bag of trash-paper—all those photocopied manuscripts, which weigh 100 pounds—into the back of your little station wagon, and then lean against the wall of the garage until you recover. Then you drive fifteen miles to the landfill, the recycling center, slowly through the beautiful tracts of woodland, accelerating to 75 through the flat cornfields, to feel again the thrill of speed. And you are immensely gratified by your own civic virtue. You drive with a calm heart and even breath.

☒

43. Oh, to have a house with an elevator, two bathrooms, and a mechanical bed!

☒

44. Your friend the psychiatrist told you that the reason you fall asleep so easily is because what you are doing is not interesting. Is it helpful to know that nothing is interesting? If only one could dream of interesting things! Instead, dream after dream, the same old inconsequential religious nonsense.

☒

45. Caught in the irreversible, you do things that you absolutely KNOW are futile. Yet you do them. Again and again. To what a nonsense of misery the human spirit can be reduced!

☒

46. Breath → *Braeth*, Old English for "odor," related to Greek *atmos*, "vapor." Not much help there. Latin *spiritus*, meaning both "breath" and "spirit," whence "respiration," "aspiration," "inspiration," and of course "expiration."

☒

47. What does a square with a cross inside it mean? An expansive inner tension within an inflexible confining limit. In other words, breath.

☒

48. In the computer it is called a wingding . . .

☐









DINOSAUR DREAMS

Reading the bones of America's psychic mascot

By Jack Hitt

Sixty-five million years ago, conservatively speaking, the last dinosaurs lay down and died—on the ground, beside rivers, in tar pits. Then, about a hundred years ago, they got back up and have been pretty busy ever since. Hardly a week goes by that they don't make the news, because of a new theory about either how they lived or how they died. There might be word of a new prime-time TV deal, another revelry (Dinotest Y2 primed for next year), a new exhibit, the [illegible] ontological hunk Paul Sereno, a Spielberg script, a hot toy, a legal dispute about some bones, an egg.

In America, where dinosaurs [illegible] periodically disappear from view and then resurface, like John Travolta or Democrats, capturing and losing our cycling interest. Dinosaurs are distinctly American, not only because our scholars have so often been at the forefront of fossil discoveries and paleontological theory but because the popular dinosaur is a wholly owned projection of the nationalist psyche of the United States. Their periodic rebirth in pop culture neatly signals deep tectonic shifts in our sense of ourself as a country. Even glancing appearances can be telling. After Newt Gingrich rampaged through the House of Representatives and seized power in 1994, he placed a skull of T. rex in his office. When the current resident of the White House got a new dog, he called him, strangely, "Barney"—a name most closely associated with a phony dinosaur who masks his cheerful dimness with sticky compassion.

It's been almost exactly a century since the first one stood up in New York City amid a Miramaxian media circus, and, bookending nicely, we seem to be in the clutches of another rage. One recent estimate asserts that there are probably more dinosaurs on the earth now than there were in the Mesozoic Era. The current rate of finding new species is one every seven weeks. Half of all the known dinosaurs have been discovered in the last few decades. What really marks our era are the new tools—amino-acid mapping, the CAT scan, treadmill-energetics studies—that permit us once again to read meaning in the bones and to imagine the world that was when they held up flesh.

Determining the causes of America's [illegible] tricky. They have done a lot of heavy lifting, culturewise. Besides in children's narratives (where dinosaurs still rule the world), they have served as political totems, deranged kitsch, icons of domesticated terror, cultural mules for



old-fashioned predatory mayhem.[1] Unlike Cretaceous Era dinosaurs, tieth-century ones do not die easily.

you ask Horner why early curators first set T. in a predator's stance, he'll on it was because the "ceilings in museums were too high and they had ll the space." To prove his point, he'll betray an embarrassing secret: the curators had to smash and whittle T. rex's bones and then remove brae to assemble him into that fighting posture. "There was more Bar- than science in those earliest displays," Horner says. "The curators realized it was a spectacle for the nation, and that's why T. rex looked the way he did. It was what the country wanted to see."

Early curators smash and whittle T. rex's bones to assemble him into the familiar fighting stance

Dinosaurs had been discovered long before modern America took ne cause, but they were easily incorporated into nearby myth. Native ericans assumed the large bones belonged to the "father of buffaloes." In and a 1677 discovery was identified as a "human thigh bone of one of giants mentioned in the Bible." A fossilized trackway in Connecticut of nt three-toed creature had long been thought by locals to be that of the n god Thunderbird until more advanced colonials corrected them to unstand that it was the footprint of the "raven of Noah."

was an English scientist who first announced in 1841 that these giant discoveries belonged to some new order of creature he decided to call osauria." And the first full dinosaur, the iguanodon, was an entirely ish discovery. But those early dinosaurs say more about the Old World's hed imagination than about its paleontology. Iguanodon refers to a rep- s tooth, and the image the English conjured from those bones was nothmore than an obese crocodile on four piano legs. Such are the rhinocerquadrupeds that populate the first dino narrative, Sir Arthur Conan le's *The Lost World*. Until Darwin, one wasn't able, intellectually, to deve a world that didn't already exist. The geological *Weltanschauung* was ical and stagnant, yet almost immediately it was clear that we had disered a potent new metaphor.

he first big show of dinosaurs opened in England in 1854. To inaugurate spectacle, the officials risibly set the dinner table inside the reconcted body of an iguanodon. Later a famous French feast to celebrate the al of an American dinosaur included "*hors d'oeuvres paleontologiques*" and *age bisque aux Eryon jurassiques*." We eat dinosaurs and they eat us. We ake of their dinosaurness, they partake of our humanness. From the bening there was a commingling, something vaguely divine. As with Chris- communion, we acknowledged our desire to become them by dining on n while being consumed by them. Theophagy is not a notion that casually ots in a culture, even kitschily.

et the full promise of those early dinosaurs would require New World vi-. In 1858 a professor of anatomy at the University of Pennsylvania ned Joseph Leidy examined an early hadrosaurus discovered in New Jernd came to the revolutionary insight that this monster didn't tread the nd like some brute from the bestiary but stood up. Leidy was an early pier of the new American field "natural history"—the very phrase overning the biblical view of the earth as static with a rather New World ideof looking at nature as an unfolding story, a "history."

Dinomania's great awakening came at the end of the nineteenth century, t it ultimately took the form of a competition—the Bone Wars—between fessor O. C. Marsh of Yale and Edward Cope of the Philadelphia Acade-

[1] *Tim Haines's best-selling book,* Walking with Dinosaurs, *the author tries his hand staining T.'s ebbing machismo by using a tactic of contemporary memoir publishing sexually explicit detail. In Haines's imagination, here are two T.s doing the nasty raises her tail and he approaches quickly from behind. When he attempts to mount her, ses his tiny forelimbs to steady himself by hooking into the thick hide of her back. The ling is brief, but it is the first of many. . . . By staying close, he . . . increases his chances rtilizing her by mating repeatedly. . . ." That's our boy.*

Give Us the Bones

THE DAWN OF THE BONES

AND MAY WE ALWAYS CORRECT

cals and hire minions (and eventually spies) to find ever bigger bones an

These two created an inner tension in paleontology that continues to
Marsh was an establishment figure who easily ascended into the aerie of
eme by becoming a professor at Yale. (His rich uncle George Peabody
ruled the roost at the Yale museum that still carries his name
mammal and the most famous dinosaur skeletons.) Cope, on the other h
was a self-educated man who bankrupted himself to finance his excurs
A volatile, excitable, roaming character, Cope was never comfortable
the institutional positions offered him. In the end, his suspicions of
highly connected world in which Marsh thrived drove him to James
don Bennett's *New York Herald*, where he initiated one of the most vic
personal attacks in history. He accused Marsh of destroying bones in
to shore up his reputation, of plagiarizing Cope's intellectual work, ar
to direct [illegible].

It may almost be slapstick legend at this point, but the feud was said to
begun early on in their careers when Marsh publicly noted that Cope
placed the head of a plesiosaur on—is there any nice way to tell som
this?—the wrong end. (Given the contingent and fragmentary natu
the field, getting the bones wrong is naturally a frequent charge and al
always correct.) From that time on, dinosaurology has been populated by
Marshite establishmentarians, who strain to lend the discipline the dor
solemnity of the Old World trivium, and Copean renegades, who invig
it with the improvisational air of the American hobbyist.

Today's Marshites are institutionalists like John Ostrom of Yale or even
evil paleontologists such as Stephen Jay Gould of Harvard. Copeans (
feeling aggrieved and carrying their flamboyant reputations to faraway
tutes) range from autodidact Jack Horner (with the Museum of the Ro
in Montana) to the now deceased ex-maintenance man cum world-renc
eggshell-expert Karl Hirsch to the well-publicized crank Robert Bakker, a
tailed paleontologist with a penchant for gaudy Stetsons who was once
paid adjunct curator" at the University of Colorado Museum.

The Marshites and the Copeans need each other, though—the forme
legitimizing a discipline populated by weekend enthusiasts and the latte
bringing adventure and creativity to a field that could easily settle int
own self-contented dust. These two characters are themselves deeply A
ican types—the fugitive genius at the frontier goddamning all traditior
the starchy conformist trying to reconcile a voluble present with a soot
knowable past. It's what gives the stately field its inescapably puerile na

The first dinosaur bone ever identified was a huge double ball jo
covered in England in 1677. When it was illustrated in 1763, the
Richard Brookes noted its resemblance to a monstrous pair of test
Brookes may have thought it belonged to a well-endowed biblical gian
he may not have been so far off when he named it. Marshites
like to tell this story. But, as W.J.T. Mitchell argues in *The Last Dinosaur*
since it is the first bone ever identified, "by the strictest rules of biolo
nomenclature, *Scrotum humanum* is the true name of the dinosaur."

Scrotum humanum. Dinosaurology has never been able to quite sha
Jim Carreyness, which may explain why the field attracts so many kid
amateurs. Dinosaur theorists don't need advanced degrees in organic c
[illegible] just a willingness to
ter the quite knowable bank of dinosaur findings, a chore that often b
just before first grade. The professional work can begin shortly thereafter.
years ago, a dinosaur expert in New Mexico discovered a new creature i

Although "paleontology" is a word of scientific distinc
the noun "dinosaur" means "terrible lizard," a phrase str
from the imagination of a five-year-old boy.

hemo hills and wrote an award-winning book about it—*Camptosaurus nophoti*, named for Christopher Wolfe, who was eight years old at the time. Because just what is the intellectual task of paleontologists young and old? ake a few toylike objects—really big, really cool bones—and to make inventive world. It's a kind of intellectual play that is never troubled by parison with any true vision of empirical reality. The only competition other imagined world that seems that much more neato

the first decade of the twentieth century, people everywhere were lum to see the first inhabitants of this world as they emerged from the myth ontier of the American West. Unlike England's, America's dinosaurs were to find. The nonacidic prairie soils of the West coupled with constant erosions and mild rains meant that at those early dinosaur digs, like Co- Bluff and Bone Cabin Quarry, skeletons were often just lying exposed on ground. The first dinosaur to go on tour was a plaster cast of a diplodocus, of the long-necked sauropods that would eventually become world fa s by the name of brontosaurus. For those ing to look closely, the connection be n emerging American power and the vig- xtant in the skeleton was apparent. That eling dinosaur and a subsequent discovery known, scientifically, as *Diplodocus carnegi* *Apatosaurus louisae*, after their patrons, liew and Louise Carnegie

ew York's American Museum of Natural ory unveiled the first permanent display: a tosaurus in 1905, paired in 1910 with a T. Figuring out how to hold up, say, T. rex's 0-pound pelvis was a chore. But as luck ld have it, the industrial revolution was tting every American home with the new led marvel of indoor plumbing. And that's t the curators chose—the same L joints, traps, U brackets, and threaded pipes that ed the infrastructure of America's emerging pire also cantilevered the spines, jaws, breast es, and hipbones of those two great beasts.

is certainly as much a celebration of our new ter as it was of the dinosaurs, and right away assumed oddly familiar personalities. The tosaurus was a long-necked galoot—a cud- wing, vegetarian, gentle giant. Then just ss the aisle, the psychic opposite: T. rex, zied carnivorous killer. An interesting pair e two, and it is no coincidence that their tion occurred just before we entered World War I, revealing to the world character of a new global species—the American: A big, dumb rube, un provoked—then berserker rage.

is difficult to imagine the effect those first displays must have had on the ds of our great-grandparents. But consider. You had to make a pilgrimage York to see them. Newspaper descriptions and the occasional picture on oked the desire to go. Meanwhile, all around you, a creative surge was com together—electrical wiring, indoor plumbing, the plane, the car, the ie—and it was being assembled around, over, and through you into a colos- arger than anything since Rome. The emotion that surged when you tilt



Just two dinosaurs remain on display at the American Museum of Natural History in the 1995 redesign of the museum's expanded collection, the original duo were set aside in a separate room—the dinosaur of dinosaur exhibits. The original armature still holds up those dinosaurs, and that old black steel plumbing is a work of beauty in its own right.

dinosaurs had lain down 65 million years ago, and what put them once again on their
The tensile strength of Pittsburgh steel

ed back your head to look at those early dinosaurs was awe, for sure, but it also a suffused patriotism. The skeletons gave substance and turgor to a n el feeling of giantness that citizens must have felt as they sensed their inexorable participation in a new American project of pure immensity awareness that something dinosaurian in scope was rising up in the world first modern superpower.

When the Roaring Twenties were in full swing, adventurer-dino hu Roy Chapman Andrews of the American Museum of Natural History (to be the model for Indiana Jones) set off for the Gobi Desert in searc bones. His expedition deployed America's newest projection of twenti century power, a fleet of cars. It's not altogether clear that Chapman was ing ironic when he announced that the purpose of his trip (paid for by new Dodge Motor Company) was "the new conquest of Central Asia."

With the rise of Nazism, our biggest dinosaur skeletons were considered ters of—and never has this phrase sounded so vulnerable—national s ty. As a precaution, New York's T. rex was clandestinely removed to a location: Pittsburgh, a place where victorious Nazis might never go.



No sooner had the boys come hom 1945 than our Mesozoic doppelganger b shouldering a new burden, the A-b American power suddenly seemed "t ble" in the "dino" sense—indiscrimi Oppenheimerish, annihilating. In Japa pure destructive power of Hiroshima chthonically as the incarnation of Amer evil. Godzilla: T. rex with a foreign p (and big forearms). In Hollywood, tho the postwar dinosaur was a means t plore science's limits. It all began with *Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, which b *King Dinosaur*, *The Beast of Hollow Mou* *The Land Unknown*, *Gorgo*, and *The World*, among others.

In *20,000 Fathoms* an atomic test a North Pole revives a hybridized T (again, big forearms) hell-bent on retur to the place of his birth, the Hudson er valley—a.k.a. New York City (a line more deeply true than Hollyw would ever know). At last the autho trap the monster at Coney Island shadowing by half a century *Jurassic P* melding of dinosaur and entertainmen the monster ravages his way through Tilt-a-Whirl ride, a sharpshooter hits him in the heart with a bullet pa with "radioactive isotope"—the very substance that revived him and destroys him. The message of all these movies was clear: We can re-ani the monsters or restore them to the fossil bed. Hiroshima was terrible but tainable. Behold, all ye who tremble, the majesty of American might an righteousness of her restraint.

In the 1950s, as GIs took brides and settled into Levittowns everyw the dinosaur, too, was dramatically domesticated. How? One word, mmm: plastics. With the invention of this new pliable material, an could mold a dinosaur into any imaginable position. Plastic re-animate dinosaur by putting a kind of flesh back onto those big immobile bone giving each of them a smooth synthetic flexibility. This dinosaur stood up ly lifesize at every Sinclair gas station, and miniatures populated the to tions of the department stores. Severing its umbilical connection to the conservatism of paleontology, the dinosaur now entered pop culture as

some. If dinosaurs ruled the earth once, plastic comes close to making that claim today. And what is plastic made from? The resurrection couldn't get more literal.

Like everybody else, dinosaurs turned off and dropped out in the six- and seventies. There were some minor shifts. It was in this era that net developed his other controversial theory that dinosaurs perceived net is almost single-handedly responsible for getting dinosaurs in touch their feminine side. He had discovered some dinosaur eggs and hatch- surrounded by fossilized "requisitioned food" and adult dung—the detri- a mother animal caring for its helpless nest-bound offspring. Dinosaurs come a long way from the macho "terrible lizards" that erupted *ab ovo*, to begin their rampages. One of Horner's discoveries was *Maiasaura* (the ase of the feminine "a" ending versus the masculine "us"), meaning d mother lizard." Around this time, incase you don't recall, the hottest show host was Phil Donahue and the president was Jimmy Carter.

Dinosaurs' next epic pop-cultural leap in the national consciousness was movie *Jurassic Park*. Like every curator before him, Spielberg seized the e again time to rearrange the Rorschachian bones. The star of that movie the velociraptor. The brontosaurus and the T. rex make almost cameo pearances, like Robert Mitchum in the *Cape Fear* remake—an insider's nod the grizzled original. The brontosaurus has only one significant scene, zing a few gallons of dino snot all over the kids. Still the goofball, after these aeons. T. rex assumes his familiar role as enraged killer, but he's still triot, arriving at the end to save the day, like the cavalry.

And just who was the velociraptor in this 1993 movie? For a dinosaur, he small, hummingbird, and warm-blooded. The scientist in the film noted gular instincts ("lethal at eight months"), cunning ("problem-solving lligence"), and strategic adaptability ("they remember"). At a time when Japanese seemed to be taking over the world, we gazed upon a new st—the global-business warrior, physically downsized, entrepreneurially , rapaciously alert, ready for the dissolution of the nation-state. If the Pa- Rim was poised to take over the world, then this dinosaur was our re- nse; an image that reflected how we conceived of our enemy as much as we conceived of our new selves. The old-economy capitalist (T. rex) ere but sidelined, yielding to the distinctive features of the new econ- capitalist—lean, mean, smart, fast, and fatal. Many of the incidental de- tions of *Jurassic Park*'s velociraptor could easily be dropped into a *For-* magazine profile of Henry Kravis, "Chainsaw" Al Dunlop, or Larry on, without any editing. Even its Latinate name eerily foreshadowed its re metaphorical role. "Velociraptor" means fast-footed thief.

After *Jurassic Park*'s success, the American Museum of Natural History ok up the bones once again and then, in 1995, tossed them out into a new splay that received widespread praise. What the visitor sees is very much a world, fully reimagined as a time of environmental balance. These ibs are shown in familial clusters, in mini-dioramas under glass. Many are rll and seem as approachable in their outsized terrariums as gerbils in a sub- den. They are poised not to kill but to mate and to remind us, as the isney movies do, of the Great Circle of Life. One display comes across like ntact family brimming with centrist heterosexual values—a mom and pop sauri, plus three little hatchling psitts, gathered together, possibly on r way to church. A rare dinosaur fetus is also on display. The sum total nts toward a very Al Gore–like dinosaur—the ecosaur.

t least, I think that's what it means. In these tenuous epistemological days,

the museum adopts an unnerving tone. Each display states a bit of cur
dino theory and then mercilessly undercuts itself. One glass case explains
latest nasal theory regarding duckbills, but then beside the text a yellow w
ing label reads: "These are all intriguing hypotheses, but the fossils do
give us enough evidence to test whether any of them are correct. The r
tery remains unresolved." That's a bit too much postmodern uncertaint
hang at the eye level of a ten-year-old, don't you think?

When I asked a museum official what he thought the entirety of such
exhibit added up to, he said, "Dinosaurs were the most successful life f
that ever lived on this planet, and they became extinct. Extinction
real part of life, and it's not so bad. When the dinosaur died out, the w
went on and other species were created. One of those species was the hu
form. I think that, in all likelihood, our species will become extinct, and w
that happens, that's probably not a bad thing."

So let me get this straight. We don't know anything and we're door
What a distance we've traveled since we looked at that first *Scrotum*
manum and saw our own lusty selves. Ecosaur doesn't begin to capture the
ging confidence and fear of empire-wide failure embodied here. Let's
grade. Apocalyptosaurus.

Fortunately, it wasn't long before the osteo-reply to apocalyptosauru
rived. In the winter of 1999, the National Geographic Society annou
a "feathered dinosaur" exhibit with fresh specimens from China. The e
display represented a Tony Bennett–like revival for Yale paleontol
John Ostrom, whose brilliant hypothesis about the fate of dinosaurs
gotten obscured in the last two decades of fervent debate about extinct

Among dozens of theories about the dinosaurs' fate—including gl
warming, subterranean-gas leaks, magnetic fields, trans-species misceg
tion, and, of course, the meteor from outer space—Ostrom's idea suggests
some dinosaurs may have just evolved. Their streamlined progeny got l
er, faster, and feathered before taking to the air. Right now they are p
ing seed from the feeder dangling outside my window. Simple, elegant—
simonious, as paleontologists like to say—and yet from a nationalist view
can understand why it was ignored. Dinosaurs evolving into the larger f
ily of life instead of going down in a blaze of intergalactic holocaust? No

But there was another side to this revival. At the time, America's st
as superpower, as well as keeper of dinosaurs, was beginning to be c
lenged by China. Amid reports about China's theft of nuclear secrets, c
destine arms sales, and independent space exploration, word came that
na was building the world's largest dinosaur park in Chuanjie provi
Authorities there had discovered two skeletons of dinosaurs fossilize
mid-battle—an extremely rare find of obvious commercial appeal.

"Chuanjie has now passed Utah in the United States," Chinese papers
tinually boast (quoting an American expert) "to become the largest b
ground of dinosaurs in the world." A staggering announcement, given
na's previous clumsy attempts to enter the paleontological major leagu
1983 China find, for instance, was named *Gongbusaurus*, literally, "Min
of Public Works-osaurus."

And now a truly brilliant Chinese breakthrough—the discovery
feathered dinosaur, and possible proof of Ostrom's theory—was visi
America. In the exhibit, these specimens were not mere bones but taxi
mically dressed up, as if stuffed after a recent hunt, feathered from hea
toe in harvest colors of sedge brown, crimson red, and dark yellow, all p
in the most aggressive postures possible: raised claws, open teeth, w
volant. They looked like enraged fanged turkeys. And hidden right the
the taxonomic name was their true significance: *Sinornithosaurus miller*
"Chinese bird-reptile of the new millennium." Freshly discovered, freshly m
ed—a brand-new, slimmed-down dinosaur metaphor had sprouted w
and flown off to Asia. Maybe, it seemed, America was bowing out of the g

But then maybe not. A few weeks after the exhibit arrived in Wash
ton (Chinese dinosaurs in the bosom of our capital—the horror, the horr

...co-patriots could breathe easier. Scandal erupted when it was charged that ... of the exhibits was a fake. Under headlines "Piltdown Bird" and "Buy ...ieware," articles wallowed in new information that Chinese peasants ... cobbling together different fossils, often with glue and paint, to feed the ...rnational market. The implication was clear. Like videocassettes in a free-...e dispute, Chinese fossils were just more cheap pirated fakes being ...aped in the lucrative American marketplace.

...carcely a few weeks later came an announcement from Hollywood, Flori-... A philanthropist named Michael Feinberg had purchased a fossil for a ...eum there, and it had been closely reexamined. In the words of a breath-... AP reporter, it was "a 75-million-year-old creature with a roadrunner's ...y, arms that resembled clawed wings and hair-like feathers." You want ...hers? America's got your feathers right here. "A dinosaur Rosetta stone," ... a museum associate, just in case anyone underestimated its significance. ...Linnaean name of America's new proof of birdness was as rich in mean-...as *Sinornithosaurus millenii*. In its own moist and Disneyesque way, the new ... reincarnated that old blend of the bront's amiability with T. rex's dor-...nt ferocity: *Bambiraptor*.

...ur Mona Lisa, as Ostrom described it. A sentimentalized dinosaur for a ...timentalized time. In the tradition begun with *Diplodocus carnegii* a cen-... ago, the full name of the latest celebrity dinosaur is *Bambiraptor feinbergi*.

...riving a stake through the heart of the Chinese bird-dinosaur has since ...ome a seasonal blood sport. Last ..., China announced a true bird-... dinosaur discovery. They called ...*rotopteryx* (meaning "first feath-...". As if. Professor Alan Feduccia ...the University of North Caroli-...at Chapel Hill looked at the ...lence and immediately laughed ...t it as "dino-fuzz."

...But feathers hardly matter any-...re because paleontologists are ...ll cooing over the latest proof ...dinosaur warm-bloodedness. ...is confirmation, found last year, ...ives from the discovery of the ...t intact dinosaur organ—a ...art—that had miraculously sur-...ed fossilization. Described as a ...pefruit-sized, reddish-brown ...ne, it was found in the heart of ... heart of the country: South ...kota. True dino-land. Ameri-...—where modern dinosaurs first ...red and where they still thrive. ...ddish brown, the description ...ds, as if the blood were still in ...almost beating. That's how it goes with dinosaurs. We're always getting ...ser to the true dinosaur, the next dinosaur, the best dinosaur. It's Amer-...'s task. There is always another one on the way. With only a fourth of the ...osaur fossils estimated to have been found, the empire has a ways to go.

...ach subsequent discovery will conceal new messages in its bones, hints ...our superpower's new place in this world and our hearts. The new bones ...ll stand up and the old ones will lie down. The theories will wax and ...ne. But no matter what we may think the newest dinosaur means for ...t month, or that decade, it will really be about what every dinosaur has ...ays been about—not extinction but the other, deeper dream of this na...n: the big comeback, the perpetual *novus ordo* of America, the unex-...ted feat of resurrection. ■

DRIVING A STAKE THROUGH THE HEART OF THE CHINESE BIRD-DINOSAUR HAS SINCE BECOME A SEASONAL BLOOD SPORT



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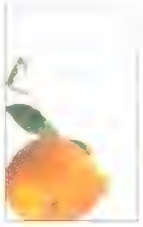
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DEATH IN SLOW MOTION

A DESCENT INTO ALZHEIMER'S

BY ELEANOR COONEY

My mother was always my favorite person. Hip, cool, brilliant, funny, sane. A writer. Mary Durant. I have a picture of her from one summer in the mid-sixties in the back yard of our house in Connecticut. She's in the midst of me and a bunch of my teenaged friends, sitting in a canvas chair, slim elegant blue-jeaned legs crossed, laughing. We're all free and easy, horsing around, performing for her. She's in her early forties, beautiful, probably a year or so away from meeting Mike, her third husband, the love of her life. When they married in 1966, he was thirty-two and she was forty-four.

Whoever it was who [illegible] death was full of malarkey. When Mike died in 1989, my mother's own life was pretty much sucked out of her. It will get easier eventually, everyone said, but it didn't. It got worse. She rallied for a while—took a job as curator of the local historical museum and even wrote another book. But her heart was shredded. I could always hear it in her voice when she answered the phone. The first shadows fell around 1997, with blanks in her short-term memory and uncharacteristic lapses in judgment. She was seventy-five years old at the time, and I have no doubt that protracted despair had plenty to do with her mental deterioration. My theory is that it affected the physical structure of her brain, softened it, made her vulnerable to the disease. She's graduated to delusions and disorientation and now some long-term-memory loss too. My mother was truly gorgeous once—wavy brown hair, brown-green eyes full of wit and intelligence, an aquiline nose with [illegible] front teeth [illegible] and she aged well, tall and trim. Time, grief, and dementia have bent her a little, [illegible] and demeanor surprisingly normal. If you didn't know her before and you met her briefly, you might not notice anything wrong. If you were someone who knew her well, the change you'd see first is in her eyes: they're alert, but blank and dead [illegible]

[illegible] mate, Mitch, went to Connecticut and [illegible] by the roots and moving her to California. We had to. Her old friends were calling, telling us things weren't right at all, that she was confused, bursting into tears, forgetting the way to [illegible] before [illegible] all [illegible] Valley [illegible] by phony sweepstakes telemarketers. She's only [illegible] out now. One more winter alone there and [illegible] such a decision, but he did. It looks to me like [illegible]

He may as well have suggested elephantiasis. [illegible] arrives kept their marbles right up to the end.

[illegible] Collins, is an expansion of this article.

in a rage and slammed the door. We'd had a hu
night because I hadn't got my mother out of th
and back to her apartment with enough dispar
after dinner. I'll be fuck
ought, if I'll just
in the house and wait like a woman for him
come back. When he does,
can wonder where I am.
where I can spy on him. I'll wait, even if it tak
three hours, and I'll watch him when he does
know he's being watched. I want to see him lo
for me. And then I'll make *him* wait.

Stability and predictability in daily routine
what the sages prescribe for people w
Alzheimer's. They also have wise words
the caregivers: Take care of yourself. Give yo
self a break. Be sure to set aside time to do t
things you enjoy. Get plenty of rest. Pamper yo
self. Enlist the help of friends and relatives to
sist with your "loved one." Take time out

I FELT SURE THAT WITH LOVE AND ATTENTION,
WE'D RESTORE MY MOTHER'S FALTERING MEMOR

n that I'd be able to help

yourself, they chant. Time out for yourself? I'll
you in on a secret. There is no time out, not ev
when you are sound asleep, if the person is
fact a loved one and money is scarce.

Money. It can't buy back a person's mind, b
it can go a long way toward helping you save yo
own. My mother arrived with some monthly
come. Mitch and I are both writers, which mea
that we sometimes have to do other things to p
the bills. I was under contract to write a no
about eighth-century China (indentured, I sho
say, because the manuscript was way overdue a
the advance by then a dim memory). The ti
when Mitch would have been doing other thi
for money to support the household had to go
my mother's care and attention. In our perf
naiveté we had not anticipated just how much c
and attention that would be. Before we knew
we were financially dependent on her.

And then there was plenty of good old-fa
toned guilt: guilt over dragging my mother aw
from her home, guilt over what I was inflicting
Mitch. He'd been a single father, had raised th
children from diapers to adulthood. He'd m
than earned his freedom, and now, because
me, he was in a domestic trap again. This is n
fair, I thought. This is not what he signed on f
We weren't even officially married; he was un
no obligation to stay.

I'll do this, he said at the beginning, but I ca
promise I'll always be nice.

I knew he wouldn't quit or walk away. T
fact that he'd raised children meant he was far b

e wanted the responsibility. It was both reassur-
ir and alarming to know he was in it for the du-
r on. But his jaw was clenched after only a
w k or so of having my mother around, and we
a
li the proverbial blind men feeling an elephant
it he dark, we were starting to get an idea of the
si and shape of the creature called Alzheimer's.
S had begged to be allowed to stay
it Connecticut. But we'd brought her,
a it was my responsibility to make
h happy. What have we done? whis-
p d the
p ped open at dawn shortly after her
a val. *What have we done?*

clung fast to my optimistic
v ons. We took her to a good doctor
f a complete physical. He put her
p antidepressants. A psychologist
t ed her and diagnosed her with
"p bable" Alzheimer's. They don't
k w
r ge
a mmune
nl is is irreversible memory loss and
d orientation until you don't recog-
n e your children, your husband,
y r wife, the process slower in some
p ple than in others, and eventually
y u forget to eat, swallow, breathe.
N t all dementia is Alzheimer's, and
d
p postmortem, and
e mination of
c es of dementia, though, *are*
A heimer's. I
r ly to consign my mother to the
b ne heap. Even if it was Alzheim-
e , I'd beat it.

n . Mitch made a trip to Tijuana to get more. He
a discovered that my mother was putting away
f nidable amounts of vodka. He marked her
b tle and found that
d pped by a full two measuring cups. My moth-
é weighs about 125 pounds. The effect on her of
a ouple of martinis was truly scary, as if she'd been
s ched in the head
g to California, we went out to dinner. We had
d iks. During dinner, she asked whether we were
ir Southbury or New Milford, towns in Con-
n ticut. Afterward, we went to the all-night
S eway, and my mother stood there under the
fl rescent lights with real terror on her face and,
h voice weirdly even, said: "I don't have the
sl htest idea where I am or why."

She'd always been a controlled, moderate cocktail drinker. Never when I was growing up did I see her even a little tipsy, and she was utterly disdainful of sloppy drunks. She still insisted she never drank more than a couple of martinis a day, and only at dinnertime. It wasn't that she was lying or covering up. It was that

Mitch's theory, that her memory loss was booze-induced, was exciting. God, we thought, maybe we can get my mother back just by sobering her up. And maybe sobering her up will fix everything



else too? For about three years, she'd been complaining of queasy stomach, shakiness, feeling

they could find nothing wrong. Vodka, she and late-night swigging. But now we believed

So we took her off the hard stuff completely and gave her ersatz wine instead. We made a ceremony

ly at the "cocktail hour." We knew it might take some time to see real results, but now we had something tangible to work with.

And every night, when I escorted her back to her apartment, I laid out her vitamins, supplements, brain nutrients, herbal stomach soothers, antidepressant, digestive enzymes . . .

like my mother, sounded like my mother, but she was becoming everything that had been anathema to her: intrusive, complaining, hypochondriacal. And that thing that most of us would rather die than be, designated by Oscar Wilde as the only valid criterion by which one divides up the human race, the condition she would have dreaded most of all: tedious.

The friends and good times I had envisioned did not materialize. At first, I worked hard to introduce her to people. Tragic factors quickly became evident: When I introduced her to someone, she forgot that person instantly. A long, fun dinner party would evaporate from her memory before the last good-night. What's the point of fun if you can't remember it? And the sad truth is that when people catch a whiff of dementia, they back

That was particularly hard for me to watch. She'd been social all her life. Her charm and manners were hardwired into her so thoroughly that she could still pull it together most of the time and fool people for a while. For a while. Then she'd slip, repeat something she'd just said, or maybe say something odd about being in Connecticut, and I'd see the little moment of comprehension on people's faces . . .

A deep streak of contrariness in my mother also helped to nullify my efforts. Mitch was acting in a local play that winter. My mother often talked about joining the theater group. She'd been onstage a lot in her day, a member of Actor's Equity. She'd been damned good. I'd like to try out, she said. Mitch and I zipped our lips at the notion of a woman with Alzheimer's learning lines — indeed, even remembering that she was in a play — but I took her to one of his rehearsals, thinking that maybe she could help the actors practice their lines, or make friends, or just be entertained. She sat for about fifteen minutes and then whispered that she was bored and wanted to

If I took her to an informal session of singing (she used to love to sing) at a local musician's house, she'd sit, silent and diffident, then whisper that she felt lousy and wanted to go home. And writing? Forget it. My mother's prolific typewriter had always thundered away up on the top

silent and dusty. She didn't like the action of the keys, she said (never mind that it was her own machine). So I got her another. And another. Soon she had four typewriters lined up on her desk. Plenty of paper, pencils, Wite-Out. The only

of finished and the effort cost her a week of fretting and fluttering. And *that* really scared me.

A terrible transformation began to take pl
in me as well: This mother I had once loved
show off because she was so much cooler a
smarter than anyone else's mother now emb
rassed me. I scrambled to cover up the gaps,
compensate, and, before long, to hide her.

How quickly our own little prison clanged sh
around the three of us. Our lives became a ho
rish ritual: My daily phone call to her, 9:00 A
sharp. Mitch delivering the morning paper
her, visiting with her to keep her away from
for a while so that I could try to get some wo
done in the morning. Her sighs of desolation a
loneliness. Her yearning to return to Connec
cut and the vanished good times. Both of us t
ing to explain why that wasn't possible. Te
over Mike, as fresh and hot as if he had died j
yesterday. My churning, muddy emotions wh
I desperately tried to write about plague and m
der in Canton in 750 A.D., at triple speed.

Afternoons, a kindly fellow we hired, thou
we couldn't afford it, took her out in our car a
tried to keep her diverted until the dinner h
and her appearance at our door. She was s
making her own breakfast and lunch, but d
ner alone was unthinkable. There had been
too many lonely dinners with too much vodk
Connecticut. I had pledged that there would
no more lonely nights, but I had envisio
friends and activities . . .

I had also envisioned her strolling to the m
ket a few blocks away in our beautiful town,
ing some shopping for herself. Forget that too.
had a hard time finding her way from her ap
ment to our house, though she could sure as h
find her way to the liquor store at the other
of town, and even talk them into taking her C
necticut check. Which meant we had to k
her wallet empty and her checkbook and cr
card away from her if she was going to spend
time at all alone at her apartment so that
could have some time alone at our house. A
purloining her checkbook and credit card
keeping her wallet empty meant that we ha
do a lot of fast talking and fancy footwork an
of her shopping for her. We had to control her,
ert discipline on her, fib and dissemble, all
perfectly contrary to how I was accustomed all
life to relating to my mother. It affected me
way it would if someone held a gun to my h
and told me I had to skin cats or be an air
stewardess. I hated it, but I had no choice. Lu
ily, Mitch had resolve where I did not.

We were it. We were her friends and activi
We were all that stood between her and aloner
So: Dinner each and every evening, on time
our house. My efforts to keep her occupied
entertained and out of Mitch's hair. Her reper
of conversational topics—stories from the pas
could have recited in unison with her, or I

h she missed Mike and why did he have to die
how she wished she could just die herself. My
a sorrow over Mike dredged up and renewed.
hy she couldn't have it, the amazing perpet-
staircase conversations:
Is there any hard liquor in the house?"
No, Mom. No hard liquor. Doctor's orders."
And it settles my stomach."
It messes up your head. You don't know where
are or who you are. Besides, we've been
l"—he—"that hard liquor is a dangerous mix
your antidepressants."
Oh?"
Yes. Very bad. And you want to get your mem-
back, don't you?"
Of course I do."
So let's try an experiment. No hard liquor for
ple."
All right. I'm willing to give it a try."
Here's my wife."
Is there any hard liquor in the house?"

dementia. They become unappetizing. They don't bathe unless you make them. They'll wear dirty un- nails and feet will be grimy. Unclean children are You will begin to find a person you love ... odious. And you will hate yourself for feeling it.

And after the bath, the bedtime merry-go-

"Who are the women who are taking things out of my house?"

"No one's taking anything out of your house, Mom. Everything's safe and sound."

"Someone called me and said two women were emptying my house and putting everything in storage."

"Nope. No women are taking anything out of your house. If they were, I'd know about it. You have a housesitter. Everything's fine."

"What's my housesitter's name?"

"Billy Reynolds."

"Ah, yes. Billy Reynolds. And he's taking care of things?"

And every night, dinner on little folding tables in front of the television. CNN, *Wheel of Fortune*, *Jeopardy!*, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, *Judge Judy*, *Entertainment Tonight*, *Inside Edition*, *Hollywood Squares*, *Who's Line Is It Anyway?*, *Let's Make a Deal*, *The Price Is Right*, *Family Feud

routine free household. We'd eat together, or [illegible] felt like it. After my mother's arrival we produced 558 dinners, on schedule, every night, [illegible]

And every day, without fail, she'd ask: "Am I having dinner with you tonight?" Or, a slight variation, spoken in a piteous voice that caused [illegible] enough food for me to eat with you tonight?" Pretty lousy acting, Mitch observed.



Sarcasm rose to my tongue. Sometimes I could check it. Sometimes I couldn't. "No, Mom," I'd say. "There's not enough food. You're going to [illegible]

Moneylessness, my manuscript deadline, guilt, [illegible] our own: we were trapped, swimming hopelessly in circles, sinking, hearing my mother's ever-narrowing set of refrains, recited daily like the stations of the cross, each one a knife in my heart: her homesickness, her loneliness, missing Mike, [illegible] stomach. Oh, God. Her stomach.

The doctors and hospitals she'd gone to all [illegible]

wrong, but she was in misery. One gastroenterologist I talked to on the phone when we were moving her out of her house spoke sharply [illegible] how she had got hold of his home number and called him there, more than once. I apologized. You realize that your mother is suffering from dementia, don't you? he said without sympathy. Uh, yes, I said, but of course I had had no notion then of the real meaning of the word.

She'd complain of nausea and "seasickness" almost every day. It didn't take long for us to see that abstinence from liquor not only was failing to restore her memory but was having no effect whatsoever on her stomach. So we took her to doctors, acupuncturists, chiropractors. Mitch drove her hundreds of miles to specialists. She had prescription medicines, she had Chinese herbal medicines, she had bitter witches'-brew concoctions that I made in the pressure cooker. Sometimes we had a few days' respite and thought we'd found the cure, but always, always, it came roaring back. Sometimes there were acute attacks when she'd cry and tremble and double over with pain. I admit I caved in a couple of times and let her have a drink, but it did nothing at all for her stomach, and even a small drink manifested her brain damage in a way that was anything but fun or soothing for her and was alarming as hell for me.

Mitch and I argued. He believed that some of the time her pain was real, but that there were other times when she faked it—not necessarily consciously but reflexively, because she tried [illegible] to get my attention and sympathy, to get a drink. I said maybe it sure seems that way sometimes—but what if it *is* real? I can't afford not to believe it's real. Imagine yourself [illegible] mile, I said, and suffering, and every one around you sick of hearing about it and ignoring you. It's a thought not to be borne.

And of course, I was getting sick of hearing about it. Her complaints, her face gray with [illegible] her questions, her objections, hospitals, and pharmacists—repeated verbatim virtually every day as if we'd never discussed the topic before—became torture for us all. She'd groan, stagger, weep, hold her stomach. As the months progressed and nothing we tried worked, I came to live in a chronic state of rage and helplessness—rage at my failure, helplessness in the face of this infuriating, baffling stomach demon that wrecked any chance at all of making my mother's life even a little bit pleasanter. It was bad enough that she had to lose her mind; it was intolerable

t she also should suffer physically almost all the
ne, that nothing could be done, that she
didn't understand or remember how hard we'd
d, that even the kindest doctors didn't want to
about it anymore, that Mitch and I got so raw
h impatience that we could barely stand to
ar another word about it. It was a nattering
htmare. Don't take it out on her, don't take it
on her, I rebuked myself. Don't.

But sometimes I did. Not that I beat her or
ything crude like that. I promise I didn't. I
stly succeeded at being patient. I wanted more
anything to relieve her pain, but there were
nes when I snapped at her, yelled, stamped my
t or clenched my fists and hissed with poiso-
us exasperation. Mitch, my valiant trouper
st of the time, raised his voice more than once.
e'd cry. I wish I could just die, she'd say. If I had
un I'd shoot myself.

Then came remorse and more self-flagella
n. Was this what my mother deserved, in her
kness and loss? To be at the mercy of a couple
ill-tempered louts like us? Had I really tried
erything to help her, or was I just giving up

mother are stripping the house bare, even tak
ng down the walls.

Connecticut. Her wit, her intellectual
ativity, all erode away like desert sandstone while
Connecticut stands solid in her memory.

"I think I'll go back to Connecticut and live
with Joan Talbridge."

"Mom, you can't go live with Joan Talbridge."

"Why not?"

"Because she has a life of her own. She can't
take care of you. She's not your family."

"I don't think I need to be taken care of."

"But you do. Your memory's full of holes. You
need to be with your family."

"Joan invited me to come live with her."

"She invited you for a visit. Not to live with
her. To visit. She can't do the job that a family
does."

"Give me examples of some of these goofy
things I'm supposed to have done."

"Well, the fact that we've already had this
conversation about fifty times is one example."

"No, really. Give me some examples."

"Well, you were bilked out of almost eight

cause I'm too selfish and stupid and lazy to
d the cure? She, who had always come to my
cue. I felt hard and mean and full of sorrow all
once, and it drove me truly mad. Drove me, in
t, to drink.

When we first told her she'd have to stay off the
dka, we were honorable. If we were going to ask
r to abstain, then so would we. Such integrity!
just a couple of months, we were the ones
th hidden bottles. We moved like sorcerers,
ftly bringing out the hooch while she was right
ere in the room with us and her attention was
verted for a moment, pouring ourselves stiff
es and drinking them nonchalantly out of cof-
cups right in front of her. Sometimes in the
ddle of the day. Sometimes in the morning,
nething I've never done in my life.

I discovered a wee shot at dawn to be the best
y to shut down my poor roiling head and get
ck to sleep for another hour or two. I found
like little oases of peace and solitude,
pped on my pillow and staring into my soft
night-light at 6:00 A.M., sipping from a cup,
ling the alcohol spread subtly from my stom-
h to my limbs and brain, displacing the
idue from disturbing dreams. Like this one:
at my mother's house in Connecticut. Mike
s come back to life for a while, just a while,
all know it's only temporary, and he and my

grand. You couldn't find your way to old friends'
houses where you'd been going for forty years.
You were depressed and crying whenever I called
you on the phone. You called me once to say
you'd taken Polly to a kennel, but you couldn't
remember which one, so you called all of them
and none of them had her, and then it turned out
Polly was shut in the basement. Every one of
your old friends was worried about you. They
called me and Timmy to tell us they were worried
about you."

"They were worried about me?"

"Yes. All of them. Because of little things that
were adding up. Joan Talbridge was one of the
people who were worried about you."

"Give me some examples."

"I just did. That's an example."

"I could go live with Joan Talbridge

We were moving. We'd decided it
would be easier on us and on her to have her on
the same property but in her own little house. Far
from the liquor store. As it was, we were run-
ning back and forth between her apartment and
our rented house ten times a day, and when I was
at my house I could feel her loneliness emanat-
ing from the direction of her apartment like a
tractor beam.

There was a gap of about a month between

to move her into the new house (my brother ar-
apartment, pack all her stuff, scrub and clean the
porarily stash her in the run-down little studio in the back yard of the old house—all in the midst of packing up our own life detritus, tossing it
ing it into the car, and taking it up to the new house, trip after trip after trip.

three more chapters to go, so Mitch had to do most of the packing. I'd sit at my computer in my ransacked study and write for a few hours every day while he tramped nonstop past my door carrying furniture and huge boxes and my mother wandered in and out, her confusion multiplying exponentially, no idea at all what we were doing or why, presenting me with tattered grocery lists from months before.

We moved the washer and dryer, cages of yowling cats (ten—yeah, I know), dressers that fell off trucks, scattering socks and underwear in the street. We stayed up until 4:00 A.M. three nights in a row cleaning and scrubbing the old house. Then we moved my mother into the master bedroom of the new house while Mitch and I, a couple of stumbling zombies, burrowed in among piles of books and clothing in the spare room. Meanwhile, a carpenter was converting the garage into a "granny unit" for my mother, my brother again handling the financing. As soon as that unit is finished, we told ourselves, everything will be fine. No more running back and forth between house and apartment in town. She'll be snug in her own little place, and we'll be just a few steps away.

One evening shortly after we moved, Mitch made a little joke to my mother about "room service" when he brought her a snack on a tray. She laughed, accepted the snack, and pretended to tip
malcy. I was pathetically grateful. One of the great things about my mother had been her sense of humor.

The next morning, she was dressed and sitting on the window seat in the living room.

"There's no need to stay here any longer," she said. "We should check out now."

I was barefoot, in my bathrobe, hair mashed, a Breathe Right stuck to my nose.

"Where," I asked cautiously, "do you think are?"

I saw a flash of fear in her eyes.

"Isn't this a hotel?"

and the end to her awful loneli
because she'd have her own cozy lit
house a mere ten feet away from ours turned
to be our worst delusion so far. She became
prisoner, and we became hers, in a way that ma
the endless winter before we moved seem lik
tea party.

She lived in the house with us for about

weeks before the cottage was finished enough
us to move her in. This house has a great
kitchen and dozens of cupboards. Her cupboa
banging back in the kitchen at the old hou
searching for utensils whose locations she co
never learn, had annoyed us, but now she was l
a musician going from a small electronic k
board to a mighty church organ. There are th
ty-six cupboard doors in the kitchen, each w
a slightly different pitch. Mitch and I lay in b
in our junk-packed little room at dawn or t
middle of the night listening to the symphon
BANGETY-BANG BANG BANG! BAN
BANGETY-BANG!

This banging was a sound wired into my syst
from as far back as my childhood. When she w
young and whole, my mother had had an i
pressive temper, and cupboard noise was one
its expressions. Now, in 1999, every BANG s
shock waves of mingled associations, one ancie
and primal and the other very recently acquir
along my worn and frazzled nerves directly to
brain. It was around then that I noticed mys
getting seriously jumpy. I flinched and twitch
and leapt at any small unanticipated noise, o
Mitch came around a corner when I wasn't e
pecting him, or, worst of all, when my mot
called my name.

The money my brother had set aside for t
garage conversion ran out, of course, before t
work was quite finished. The walls were up and t
plumbing and electricity were in, but Mitch a
I did all the drywall taping and mudding and th
the sanding ourselves, working until well af
midnight night after night, drinking wine, be
vodka, the radio blaring. After that we prim
and painted the walls, then scrubbed and scrap
the cement floor, and primed and painted it. Th

…gged furniture, rugs, books, and putting out … s, all at top speed. Maybe she would wander … nd out, admire the work, compliment us. This …oing to be your little house, Mom, I'd tell her, …htly, guiltily, but it rolled right off her. I don't …ak it was merely a matter of faulty memory; … just plain didn't want to hear it. She'd wander …y, then come back five minutes later.

"Tell me again," she'd say. "Why are you doing …his?"

When the night finally came to move her in… the cottage, I felt as if I were putting her out … an ice floe. Stability and predictability, say … experts. This, including getting her out of … house in Connecticut, was move number … in seven months.

But Mitch and I were exultant. We crouched … ind the car in the dark and watched her mov… around inside the cottage. She's in! We did … Our new era begins! I had laid out everything … d need for breakfast, shown it all to her: oat… al, honey, tea, butter, bread, eggs, bacon, ba… as, all utensils, milk and orange juice in the …igerator. She had a hot plate, a sink, a toast… a blender. Polly nested happily on the sofa. …ere were familiar pictures on the walls, fresh …ets on the bed. She could be near us, part of …family, but independent! The last six weeks … been intolerably intimate, with no apart… nt to send her to, *nowhere* to send her to, but …w, at last, she was in her new home, au… omous but not alone.

…arly the next morning, I woke to cupboards …ging. I flew out of bed and down the hall to the …hen. She was in her nightgown, barefoot, be… wlered. She was looking for something to eat.

We're riding in the Volvo, which …ds new tires, a new steering rack, and a new …ffler. She's always in the car with me, because … wants to go with me everywhere I go. It's im…ossible to get to the car and out the driveway …thout her seeing me. Sometimes I'm able to …ak away by going out the side door of the …se, hunching over and crawling into the pas…ger side of the car, but I usually get busted. …re's nothing at all wrong with her eyes and …e. I'm alone all the time, she says. Alone and …ting at the wall. Reminding her that she's in … rarely alone, except for a few hours in the …rning (if I'm lucky), does no good. In her …nd, she's alone all the time.

…y clothes are not particularly clean. Neither …r my mother's. Her hair needs washing. Mine …os too, but not as obviously. She gives off an aro… that's not exactly offensive but slightly zoo…ical. And complex. It contains elements of …escent from long ago that had intoxicated me …en I was a child: cologne, cigarette smoke, …ptick. I used to smell her tweed jacket and swoon a little. In the close atmosphere of the … the car [illegible]

"What was the reason for the [illegible] time I was out here?" my mother asks. Her tone is normal, conversational. A person riding with us for the first time would find nothing out of the ordinary in her question. But if that person were also watching my hands on the steering wheel, he or she might have noticed them whitening.

I keep my own voice as calm and normal as I can.

"It wasn't last time, Mom. You've been out here for a year. You've been to five doctors since you've been here."

"And none of them had any suggestions?"

"You've got them all stumped, Mom."

"You'd think in this day and age they could solve a simple stomach problem."

"Well," I say, "less than a century ago they didn't even have antibiotics or anesthesia. They held you down or hit you over the head while they sawed your leg off. Medicine is actually still kind of primitive." A few years back, such a comment would have provoked a lively discussion with my intellectually nimble mother. Instead:

"Have I been to a gastroenterologist?"

"You've been to the best from coast to coast."

"And none of them had anything to say."

"They've given you every test there is, Mom. You've had CAT scans, MRIs, endoscopies, blood tests. They can't find anything wrong."

"There was a pharmacist in the next town. He gave me something that worked." She points vaguely to the northeast through the car window.

"No, Mom. There's no next town. Nothing's worked. If there were something that worked I'd have a truckload of it. I'd be giving it to you night and day."

"This happened the last time I was out here."

"No. No. There was no 'last time.' You've been here for more than a year. Your stomach's been bothering you for three years now. No one can figure it out. It's got nothing to do with being out here."

"It didn't happen back home."

"No, Mom, no! It started years ago. At home. You went to three different gastroenterologists in Connecticut. You went to Mount Sinai Hospital. You went to the Sharon Hospital. You went to five hundred doctors. No one can find anything physically wrong."

"What was the reason for the [illegible] time I was out here?"

When she had her apartment in town, she was constrained somewhat by not being completely sure how to get to our house. No more! The front door to the new house burst open twenty, thirty, forty times a day, every day: my mother, searching for her basket (which she has always carried instead of a purse), asking if she was

asking if there was vodka in the house, telling us she was going to take a nap, asking the name of the doctor she saw last time she was here, showing us a grocery list, searching for her basket, telling us she wished she knew when she was going to die, asking if there was vodka in the house,

Mary Durant wrote two novels and, with Michael Harwood, co-authored two works of nonfiction, including On the Road with

Farewell Time, *an archly sophisticated novel, now out of print, about a young woman told from four different points of view.*



ne night, after Lisa and the boy had been torn apart and he was carried off by the Pardoner, we went on for a drink—Gregor, Lisa, the Novice, and me. The Novice, off on a monologue. Somehow it was triggered by a bit of conversation about money [. . .] Most of her monologue was delivered to ts of actresses fall a little in love with their directors—the way a housewife falls a little in love with her obstetrician. Lisa didn't look at her once during the recital. Not once, not in jealousy or interest, and it wasn't a bad performance. "We were desperately poor when I was a tiny girl." The Novice warmed up. "I mean, we'd always been one of the wealthy families in town and then . . . quite suddenly . . . we were poor. And Father . . . a gentle man . . . a scholar, really . . . couldn't cope. He couldn't cope with poverty. We lost the servants, and life became very plain. Darling Father would try to light the furnace himself, because the furnaceman wasn't coming any more, of course. I went down to the cellar one morning and watched darling Father try to light the furnace so we could be warm. Oh my. It was a black monster. I had on a white dress and white shoes. Even though we were poor, Mother never gave up appearances. She dressed me beautifully . . . hand-smocked dresses . . . white shoes. Darling Father saw me standing on the cellar steps. He was black with coal and in his shirt sleeves. He was very brave . . . for my sake. I was such a tiny girl. He smiled and said . . . I will never forget . . . making a tiny joke in spite of everything . . . he said, 'Alas, daughter mine, this is no work for a poet.' Wasn't that wonderful? To have such spirit.' And darling Mother, cooking and sewing. Scrubbing! Things she had never touched in her life. Never complaining, though everything was lost. My lovely great beauty, you know. . . ."

The Novice stopped to take another sip of whisky, and I said that everyone's mother was a great beauty, fathers were gallant, pets were faithful, and summer used to be six months long. Gregor looked at me with his sad black eyes. "You are an infidel. Everyone's mother was indeed a great

showing us a grocery list, asking if there was a h pital in the next town, telling us she was going take a nap, asking the name of the doctor she s last time she was here, asking if she was hav dinner with us, telling us she wished she kn when she was going to die, asking if there wa hospital in the next town, asking if there v vodka in the house, searching for her basket.

Searching for her basket. We heard ma things repeated countless thousands of times, the hands-down most frequently asked questi would have to be: "Where's my basket." It beca code for Mitch and me as we came to belie that we ourselves were demented. In small m ments of chaos or insanity I'd look at him, he'd look at me, and one of us would mutt "Where's my basket."

You find yourself doing things like putting a s out in the driveway, at your mother's behest, w big black boldface letters, reading: "DINN PARTY TONIGHT CANCELED!" Why? cause she'd come into the house after waking from her nap insisting that she'd invited ten p ple to dinner but that we had no food, and so had to do something to head them off.

Arguing was useless.

"No one's coming for dinner, Mom. If th were, I'd know about it."

I finally got it through my recalcitrant he that it was much easier, much more expedient find a big piece of cardboard and a Magic Ma er, make a sign and put it in the driveway, let help set it up with bricks and a folding ch Then she could relax, and then she'd forget. Th I could slip out later and remove the sign. U the next time.

Sometimes, amazingly enough, we actually round up sympathetic people and have din parties. She'd rise to the occasion, have a g time, talking, sometimes dancing, doing w she loves best—socializing. I'd see her in an timate conversation with someone, and my he would give a little surge of joy. When the gu were gone, she'd sigh. "Well, that was certai a strange evening. No one said hello to me. one acknowledged me or spoke one word to I just sat there by myself for the entire party.

My heart would plummet, my voice would r In an instant, I was the child wanting to make mother happy, and I'd failed.

"What do you mean? How can you say th People were all over you. You were the life of party. That's crazy."

She'd shrug, make a skeptical little noise of the side of her mouth just as she'd done long as I'd known her, and look away from me, lorn and pathetic.

I'm sitting at the compute my "study," a room in a far corner of the ho

[illegible] medley of clothes, papers, books, unpaid bills. [illegible] up-tap on the door nearly sends me out of my [illegible]kin. The floorboards do not creak. They give no warning at all.

"Hello?" Her pet name for me. One of the sweetest sounds in the world once. Now I leap as if someone had fired a gun in the hall.

"I'm right here," I say, summoning a pleasant voice.

"Listen, dear. I have a problem." She comes in and shuts the door, leans back against it, smoking a cigarette. She looks and sounds so absolutely normal. "Some woman came and borrowed all my letters from home and hasn't brought them back."

I close my eyes and gather myself before I answer.

"No one took your letters, Mom. They're all out in your cottage."

"No. A woman who came and took them."

TRYING

"Now, why would someone do a thing like that?"

She visited me, and I showed her the letters, but she said she'd like to take them and read them."

"Mom, if someone had come here I'd know about it. I seriously doubt there was any woman who took your letters."

"No, there was a woman in."

"What was her name? What did she look like?" There I go again. Arguing with a memory-damaged person, without a doubt one of the meanest, stupidest things you can do.

"Her name starts with a 'C.' It's an odd name. That's why I can't remember it. 'C-r-e-e' something or other."

"You can't remember it because she doesn't exist." I despise the churlish, overbearing tone of my voice. My mother defends herself bravely.

"She came here when you were gone. She wanted to interview me for the newspaper. She wanted to know about where I came from, so I gave her the letters."

"Mom, if someone were going to interview you I'm sure as hell know about it."

"Well, she took them."

"No, she didn't."

"Yes, she did."

"She doesn't exist." I feel cruel. It's a powerful compulsion. I try to get a grip. "They're here. You've misplaced them. I'll help you look for them later. I think there's just been a misunderstanding."

"Well," she says, my conciliatory words apparently helping her save some face, "we'll see if you can find them. I can't. I've looked everywhere."

"I'll find them."

"They were in the [illegible] envelope."

"I'm sure I can find them."

This is maybe the fifteenth time we've had this conversation, a couple of times already that day, and it's my fault, because I haven't done what I know I should, what Mitch has told me I must do: Gather up a bunch of her unanswered letters from home (there are dozens and dozens of them), put them in a big manila envelope, and tell her they've been returned. Breathe life into the imaginary woman too, if I must. Describe her hair and clothing. You learn that this is what you have to do. Truth is sometimes worse than useless.

On that first morning when she came into the house looking for food, I gently steered her back out to the cottage and showed her all her breakfast stuff. You should have your breakfast out here, Mom, I said. It's easier. Then dinner with us tonight, just like every night! It worked for a while, maybe a month or two. Sometimes she didn't emerge until eleven or so, allowing me a few precious hours to work, though I felt guilty every millisecond. But by then guilt was my familiar old pal, a big heavy hairy arm draped around my shoulders, and I'd learned to live with it.

We encouraged her to make her lunch out in the cottage too. It was a simple meal, the same one she'd made every day by rote for years. I always stocked her little kitchen with the necessary ingredients. That worked for a while, too. But soon I was fixing lunch for her, because she was forgetting even this routine, making weird disturbing blunders like trying to boil water in the cat dish or cook oatmeal in the ashtray, putting the ingredients for spinach soup in her electric teapot instead of her blender and scorching the whole mess. Then she began to creep in at breakfast. Often she couldn't remember if she'd eaten or not, though I still faithfully laid out her food and utensils every night. I'd have to go out and look.

Sometimes she hadn't eaten, so I'd make her breakfast. And so it went, until I was cooking for her three times a day. I'd pretty much petered out on the brain nutrients and vitamins by then. They were expensive, made no difference at all, and it was one more disheartening routine. I did keep up the antidepressants, but I might as well have thrown crumpled balls of tissue paper into a furnace.

She spent less and less time in her cottage.

"Cigarettes."

"Bought you a carton day before yesterday

"Cat food."

"I have tons of cat food."

"Vodka."

"Um, we're not drinking hard liquor these d

I have white wine for you."

"You have white wine?"

"Plenty."

lisease. Everything that

"Why did Mike have to die?" she'd sob. "When I think of all the bastards who deserve to die." Then it would pass as abruptly as it began, a little tropical squall, and in the next moment she might even whistle an old Frank Sinatra tune. I, helpless, was jerked this way and that by every rise, fall, zig, and zag of her emotions.

We'd give her a Lorazepam, a sedative prescribed by her doctor, and try to get her to go out and take a nap in the cottage. She'd go, usually acting like a beaten puppy being put out in the rain. We'd watch her pull her curtains, and we'd look at each other and wait. Sometimes we'd get a whole hour. Usually we'd get about five minutes. Her vigor was frightening. A dose that would have knocked me flat barely fazed her. We'd hear steps, then the front door would burst open.

One morning I was awake before dawn, up for a few minutes to let the cats out before I went back to bed, everything peaceful and silent. The door burst open. I jumped at least two feet off the floor and my heart nearly stopped. My mother, fully dressed, carrying her basket. She had awakened in the dark, looked at the clock, thought it was six in the evening and time for dinner.

"You're sure."

"I'm sure."

"Because I like a drink before dinner."

"Plenty of white wine, Mom. You've gotta s

worrying."

"But no vodka."

"Nope. No vodka." (There's actually a

cup of it on the back-seat floor. I take a swig w

she's looking out the window or searching in

basket.)

"What about cat food?"

"Plenty of cat food."

"And cigarettes?"

"Got a whole carton."

"What was the name of the doctor I wen

last time I was out here?"

I was the nucleus of her universe. If I w

down the hall and shut the door to get dres

she'd forget where I was, get anxious, come lo

ing for me, call my name through the door.

went and locked myself into the bathroom, sh

go outside, circle around, and tap-tap-tap on

window. I could scarcely work, hardly read a n

azine article all the way through, let alone a b

and my exercise routine was in shambles. Mit

demeanor grew daily more grim, and I co

scarcely blame him. Most men would have wa

long ago. We drank, had horrible fights, lost sl

I ran myself ragged trying to keep my mo

away from him at the same time that I strug

to protect her from the knowledge that she

become—God have mercy on my soul for e

forming the thought—old and in the wa

popped Valium day and night. Beautiful p

maceutical; it unplugged my terror for a whi

that I could function just a little. I think I m

have keeled over dead without it.

She had an insurance policy that was

posed to cover long-term health care. It

useless, we discovered, for assisted living

would only pay for a full-care nursing ho

but it looked as if it also might pay for cert

nursing assistants to come to the house

provide "companionship." We decided to t

We're riding in the Toyota because the Volvo is undrivable. My mother snaps her basket open and rummages around. I know the basic contents of that basket, though it shifts a little from day to day: her empty wallet with the picture of herself and Mike in it, her checkbook

tamps, cigarettes, matches, bandanna, nail scissors,

poignant of all, her car and mailbox

She brings out an old envelope or maybe a pa-

newspaper with her

ed, and away from us for a few hours. We
the year before, and we'd already tried the
l adult activities program, but they had
d her out after a few days for being "unco-
ative."

teen but a tough little cookie. My mother
olite when we introduced the girl to her. Oh,
really nice, the girl said about my mother. I
them alone together on the
the house and sat down at my computer.
nty or thirty minutes went by when I was
tated from my chair by a screech of rage:
ive me ALONE!"

o we tried having the girl take my mother
Take her anywhere, we said—for rides, to
beach, the movies. She likes to get out. She
action just get her
y for a while. She's
ays complaining
she's stuck here
never goes any-
re. So off they
t, my mother with
topping list, this
one I myself had
trived, and a few
ars in her pocket.
n't let her buy
ze, we warned the

an hour later the
ne rang. My moth-
demanding that we
e pick her up. (It
d been abducted;
t she had no idea
re she was. I reas-
d her, told her all
well, that we knew
re she was. Maybe
tour or two later
exhausted. I will
ght her back. Af-
she'd gone, my
her told a wild tale
it been a long, hot
middle of nowhere,
having to hitchhike back to the house.

We gave up the experiment after a couple of
ks. It was much less harrowing to just keep her
ome. She was back on the window seat, or
fling back and forth between the house and the
age, all day, every day, weeping, little flurries
jobs erupting out of nowhere, asking about
nach medicines and doctors, complaining that
was stuck here and never went anywhere.

It's not even d
the assisted-living place where we left my moth
was completely covered with pink petals from
ceremony, something Japanese having to do with
spring. Something festive and whimsical.

The day before had been one of lies and sub
"We
Mind
lett I sprang into action.

I dragged a big suitcase from under the bed,
went out to her cottage, plundered her drawers
and closet. Made instant selections: these pants,
and these, and these, clean and presentable; these
pants, and these, spotted, frayed, pathetic-look
ing. The good stuff went into the suitcase, the sad



stuff into a pile. The same with sweaters, shirts,
underwear, shoes. The freight of sentiment in

ened to overwhelm me: a frayed cuff on one of her
sweaters, artfully rolled to conceal the hole; a
shirt she loved and wore for years, now stained and
grubby. All signs of her slippage and my failure.
She was, and still is, a snappy dresser. Even de
pressed and demented, she always puts together

…eemingly trivial (to us) things in it are wor… and worried like an old dog chew, and it the… …ness more readily to… …e instance, the… …her.

…nd when I say little stuff, I mean little. There … a routine we went through… …e should … up, say, a rubber band or maybe a paper clip … the door and I'd… "Where does this go?" … as I'd shown her what to do with the rubber … for the paper clip… …d lip. I'd lost a stalk of … per bag. "Where does this go?" Then a broken … b, or a piece of string, a bottle cap, a cork, an … ty can, a pencil, until I wanted to shriek.

…'s a conundrum. So much of the demented … on's behavior is… …ntane. Is it the… …ttition and… …obsession with minutiae… …come … riating. Since the dementia is beyond the … trol of the afflicted person, it's never appro… … te to react irritably. But unless you are Moth… … eresa, you do. Sometimes you blow your top. … I so the heartbreak multiplies and mutates, un… … ou don't recognize yourself anymore.

…he can't help it, you tell yourself, she can't … it. But neither can you. I remember one re…

…God knows what's going on in my own brain and arteries. I think I can say without too much exaggeration that for now, at least by my own standards, I'm an alcoholic and a drug addict. My … lightning three or four times. I'm inflicting the same kind of harm on myself that my mother inflicted on herself after Mike's death, maybe worse. I know it, but I do it anyway.

… and I … rubble and assess the damage. Mitch's performance was nothing short of heroic, and he's as… … same thing if it had been his mother, but I can't …

And it's impossible not to feel that I hastened my mother's decline with my ham-handed attempt to save her. It doesn't matter what people say, how much they try to reassure me. I failed her, and I know it. When we started I wanted to restore her memory. Now I hope she'll forget—Mike, Connecticut, everything. I still have nasty

… DON'T TRY. IT WILL TWIST YO… …

… awful day, my mother out in the driveway in … rain, her hair in her face like a madwoman's. … I'd been pestering Mitch with some question … ther, over and over, while he tried to fix a bro… … car, and he'd finally bellowed at her to leave … alone.

"You don't want me!" she shouted. "You don't … t me!"

… watched through the window. Before de… …ntia, she and Mitch had been good pals. She … red him. He was gallant with her. We'd had … And here's what it's come to.

… the old days, when I was in trouble or need… …help, I'd pick up the phone and call my moth… Every once in a while I still get that crazy … pulse. The Connecticut… …ook the… … ittle tune her number… …e. I… …e, her voice. Of course, I can't. I grieve for … exactly as if she'd died. She's gone, I've lost … but I'm still responsible for her living, … uthing body and the ghosts in her head.

You can't live with it. Take it from me, don't try. It will twist your love around and make … you ill. Consider this a warning. You can't … it (unless maybe you're grotesquely wealthy, … ugh even then I wouldn't advise it). I wish … neone had warned me. Talk about stress—dreams—not real nightmares, but bleak little dreary desolate sepia-toned dreams, always at dawn, when I wake as rudely as if someone had grabbed … crossed into new territory from which there's no turning back. My mother was essential to me, in ways I didn't even know about before. My fantastic fortune at having such a mother always conferred a feeling of exemption. That's the only word that … could ever touch me. That's gone now. And my lens on the world has darkened a shade or two. A beautiful sunny day and flowers blooming? I look at them and think, So what?

My mother will be on my mind every day for the rest of my life. I understand now why people drink whiskey while they're still in their bathrobes. And I also understand just how flimsy is the infrastructure of cognizance, where our reason, memories, and identity lie. It's everything, but it's a delicate and finicky synaptic soufflé. Once it falls, nothing will make it rise again.

I'm also sick of hearing myself whine. I'm aware that I'm singing the white-middle-class blues here. … death row in Texas. I'm sure someone living in a tin shack in Haiti would really feel sorry for me. My share of good luck in this dangerous world is



at all of the past seventeen months. I unpack
stuff while she cries and begs. Why can't I live
you? I'm all alone here, she says. All alone.

Calls at night: Announces she'll be "ch
ng out" and going back to Connecticut to
with Joan Talbridge. The newspapers, she s
have reported that she's moving to Califor
but she's not. She's decided against it.

The next few days are a little better. A wh
day goes by without any word from either he
the staff. My dreams and my sleep improve a
tle. I call her one afternoon, and Sue answers
phone in my mother's room. She's a little o
medicated, Sue says. I'm staying
her so that she doesn't hurt her
Whatever you need to do, I tell
my heart flop-flipping like a net
fish, tacitly letting her know I'm
the litigious sort. Later, my answe
machine flashing and flashing
flashing: Ten messages from my m
er. I'm all alone. I came all the
out here to visit you, and I'm alon
this place. Oh, El-Belle! Where
you? Please, please call me.

Next time I see my mother sh
quite good. Calm, lucid, more or
coherent.

Then, whammo! A call from S
Your mother attacked the night p
son on duty so that he (!) had to
hide behind a door. Was smoking
her room. Was out on her deck, ba
ng on the railing, screaming, ELL
ELLIE! ELLIE! Waking up everyo
Her medication adjusted again.

A few more days when things se
to be improving. Then, one mo
ing while I'm visiting, Sue takes
aside, says she needs to talk busine

Your mother, she tells me, is t
most high-maintenance person h
going to stay, you're going to have
hire private-duty help, or come and fill in yo
self. She's wearing out the staff.

And here's the part that I kind of knew w
coming, that maybe I've known was coming all
lite: she's frightening some of the other residen

I'll sign off now. I've eaten the last of the sl
dogs, and the wind is howling so that
lantern's flickering and the walls of the te
are about to blow down. I'm running out of lan
oil anyway. I'll just roll up in my sleeping b
and wait for morning, if it comes. I'll consult th
image of my mother when she was in her prim
Mom, am I doing the right thing? What wou

I'm still waiting for the answer.

A GAZA DIARY

Scenes from the Palestinian uprising

By Chris Hedges

Thursday morning, June 14, Jerusalem

The artist Joe Sacco and I are driving up through the Jerusalem Hills to Beit Agron, the government-run press building. Beit Agron was the first place I visited in 1988, when I moved to Jerusalem as the Middle East bureau chief for the *Dallas Morning News*. I had no office, no staff, and no experience in the Middle East. I had arrived from Lausanne, where for four months I had studied Arabic. My teacher, an Egyptian, used to write on the board phrases such as "The Arabs are good. The Jews are bad." I later took the Hebrew University conversational Arabic course, taught by a kind and gentle Palestinian professor, Omar, who became a close friend.

Arabic is a delicate and beautiful construct. The language is poetic, magical, with calls and responses, ornate greetings and salutations, for everything from eating to entering a house. When someone brings you food you say, "May God bless your hands." If offered a coffee you say, "Coffee always," meaning may we always drink coffee during moments like this. Seven years later, now the Middle East bureau chief for the *New York Times*, I had spent 600 hours of study and reached the conclusion that mastery of Arabic was a lifelong pursuit. A little of it, though, goes a long way. After being captured by the Iraqi Republican Guard in Basra in 1991 during the Shiite uprising following the Gulf War, I was able to recite strings of bad Arabic jokes and talk about my family. I wrote Omar a thank-you note when I was released.

Joe and I pass the rusting hulks of crude Israeli armored vehicles, left as a monument to the 1948 war that made possible a Jewish state. We skirt the old walled city, its quadrilateral shape and network of streets laid out by the Roman emperor Hadrian. In the distance stands the Jaffa Gate, where, in 1538, in ornate and cursive Arabic, an inscription was placed by Suleiman, the second Ottoman ruler of Jerusalem:

> In the name of Allah the Merciful, the Great Sultan, King of the Turks, Arabs, and Persians, Suleiman son of Selim Khan—may Allah make His Kingdom eternal—gave the order to rebuild this blessed Wall.

Beit Agron is a dirty yellow stucco affair in the center of Jerusalem with tiled floors and poorly lit corridors. It has the feel and smell of a public high school. The reporters and photographers whose lives intersected mine here more than a decade ago are mostly gone now. Some I see only rarely, bumping into them in war-torn or far-flung corners of the globe; others are dead.

The stories we worked to tell, which flashed briefly across a screen or a front page before receding from the public's consciousness, are, for us, still vibrant. A shooting at a road junction in Gaza—a brief item on the wire—remains hard to retell. Years later we recount the mishaps, the funny anecdotes that, taken at face value, made our life a romp. The real stuff is alluded to only in brief, almost codelike asides and silences.

It was in Gaza, where I lived for weeks at a time during the seven years I spent in the Middle East, that I came to know the dark side of the Israeli Defense Force. During the first Palestinian uprising, begun in December 1987 and ended in

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[illegible] in crowd control. It fired five rounds [illegible] tanks. And on a few occasions the [illegible] lingered at the coverage, turned [illegible] its ward groups of photographers [illegible]

[illegible] so that came to define the occupation for me.

[illegible] Beit Agron I run into familiar Israeli press [illegible]. They are efficient: our press cards are [illegible] in minutes. They welcome me back. They [illegible] about New York. They hand out cell-phone numbers and tell us to call if we need assistance. Joe and I get up to leave, but we are blocked at the door by a man in his early sixties wearing a [illegible] is a reporter for the Israeli Arabic service. He [illegible] at the West Bank by Palestinian gunmen and held for several weeks.

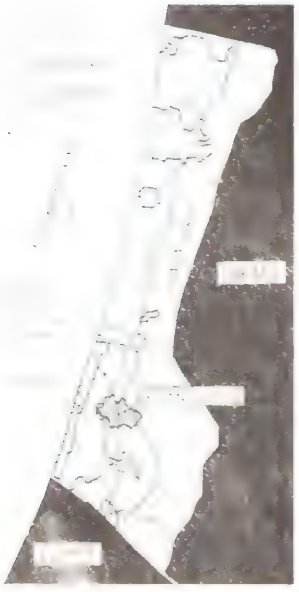
"The Palestinians are animals," he says. "They are less than human. They are savage beasts. Israel is a land of love. People in Israel love one another. But the Palestinians do not love. They hate. They should be destroyed. We should put fire to them. We should take back Beit Jala, Bethlehem, take back all the land and get rid of them."

The Israeli press officers are beaming.

"He is a great man, a poet," one says as we leave. "He is a man of peace."

Thursday afternoon, June 14.

[illegible] Israel. Erez is deserted. The multilane highways that once allowed goods and traffic to travel back and forth now resemble unused runways. The low sheds and warehouses, once used to corral Palestinians as they waited for buses to take them into Israel, are vacant.



[illegible] concrete bunkers, the black nozzles of their machine guns poking out between the sandbags. Gun battles between Palestinians and Israelis are frequent here, especially after dark. I hoist on my body armor, which has the word PRESS emblazoned across its front. The twenty-six pounds of Kevlar plating make me feel as if I were wearing a body cast.

We approach the Israeli office, where our passports and press cards are checked and our luggage is screened. I mount our bags on a little wheeled cart, the kind you use in airports, and pull it behind me as we walk the quarter mile of empty asphalt to [illegible] Palestinian side. High concrete walls hem [illegible] lanes. I will drop to the ground next to [illegible] walls if firing breaks out.

We cross the checkpoint at about 4:00 [illegible]. At the last Israeli guard post, the blue-and-w[illegible] flag with the Star of David on a pole overh[illegible] the young soldiers peer out and tell us joking [illegible] have a nice trip.

I point to the word PRESS on my chest.

"Shoot me here," I say, laughing.

And then I point to my head.

"Not here."

Friday morning, June 15, Gaza

Joe and I share a room at the Diera Hot[illegible] Gaza City, overlooking the Mediterra[illegible] Sea. The Diera was built around [illegible] returned to Gaza in July 1994 to set up the P[illegible] tinian Authority under the terms of the [illegible] peace agreement. His limited rule was, [illegible] hoped, meant to lead to a two-state solut[illegible] The assassination of the Israeli prime min[illegible] Yitzhak Rabin scuttled any chance of that.

Over the last seven years Arafat has bec[illegible] isolated and unpopular, largely because [illegible] promised economic improvements and freed[illegible] have not materialized. Only his refusal to ac[illegible] the mutated statelets offered to him at C[illegible] David has saved him from complete pillory.

The hotel is thus a symbol of what should h[illegible] been, an airy, elegant place with domed r[illegible] muted-sienna stucco walls, deep blue tiles, [illegible] balconies looking out at the sea. It resemb[illegible] with its arched doorways, the beach hotel[illegible] Tunisia. In the fall of 2000, after Islamic milit[illegible] burned down all the liquor stores in Gaza [illegible] all the hotels that sold alcohol, the Diera h[illegible] ly padlocked its bar. Wine can still be ordered [illegible] creetly. It is served in white teapots. There [illegible] small screw-top wine bottles in the refrigerat[illegible] our room. But the hotel has the feel of a pr[illegible] Islamic establishment. Arafat's senior offi[illegible] gather here in the evenings to sit on the ter[illegible] with their wives and girlfriends, few of wh[illegible] sport traditional head scarves.

In the morning, as Joe and I are loading u[illegible] omelettes and bread to avoid having to ea[illegible] the dirty stalls in the Khan Younis refugee ca[illegible] we are joined on the terrace by my friend A[illegible] Kashawi. Azmi—who with his girth could [illegible] ly play Falstaff, were he not a devout Mu[illegible] who does not drink—is a fellow reporter. [illegible] have been through a lot together. In Oct[illegible] 2000, at the Netzarim junction in Gaza, we [illegible] caught in a brutal Israeli ambush. A young P[illegible] tinian about fifteen feet from us was shot thr[illegible] the chest and killed. Since then we have alw[illegible] driven by the junction with a slight shudd[illegible] sudden coldness. Azmi, involuntarily, will sc[illegible]

s matter the world remembers.

Azmi Azzam moved to Gaza after he married a woman from Khan Younis. He had to get a permit from the Israeli military authorities to live with his wife's family in Khan Younis.

We sit looking out at the sea. Azmi has a tea. Black silk cigarette [illegible] fresh [illegible] and still on the beach.

[illegible] 15 April [illegible]

Joe and I hit our body armor into the small trunk of Azmi's car, where Azmi keeps his own vest and [illegible] camera, and head down coast road for Khan You

Azmi beats the wheel [illegible] his fingers and hums [illegible] ing to a tape of the Egypt- singer Abdel Halim [illegible]. He keeps urging us to [illegible] at the coast, he hums h [illegible] es with his head turned [illegible] he side, watching the [illegible] ing white surf, praising [illegible] sea. We weave around [illegible] ks and buses. One must [illegible] st Allah and Azmi's [illegible] on—used in lieu of [illegible] kes—when one climbs [illegible] Azmi's small, yellow car.

[illegible] he gaiety of our drive is [illegible] short when we reach the [illegible] ch-controlled junction at [illegible] Holi, about fifteen miles [illegible] side of Gaza City. The [illegible] scape here is lunar. For [illegible] es around, fields have [illegible] en bulldozed, houses demolished, and olive [illegible] es felled and hauled away. In the distance sits [illegible] nical cement tower manned by Israeli sol- [illegible] rs. On either side of the checkpoint long lines [illegible] f cars wait to cross. The coast road is the only [illegible] et to southern Gaza and Khan Younis, and at [illegible] t point it crosses a highway used by Israeli [illegible] ers and the Israeli army. When the settlers speed [illegible] n their white armored cars, all Palestinian [illegible] ic is stopped. Weeks can pass with the junc- [illegible] ion closed or the soldiers letting through on- [illegible] thin trickle of traffic. One of Azmi's friends, [illegible] who lived in Khan Younis and worked in Gaza [illegible] ty, gave up trying to make the commute and [illegible] ved in with friends in Gaza.

Azmi shuts off his tape player. He insists that [illegible] ryone open a window. We do not speak. We [illegible] buckle our seatbelts. In all war zones everyone [illegible] ds a door and a swift way to roll out onto the [illegible] und if shooting breaks out. We creep forward [illegible] the stop-and-go traffic until we face the tower. [illegible] Azmi leans forward over the wheel. He narrows [illegible] eyes and concentrates on a distant helmet [illegible] peering out of a slit in the bulletproof glass. The [illegible] tower when the Israelis [illegible] move. We wait [illegible] finally the bar [illegible]

[illegible] tlers' road. Palestinians are not allowed to use [illegible] to roll the windows [illegible]



K

[illegible] tlements. Vendors [illegible]

[illegible] wastewater. Crud [illegible] ing pits, he cou [illegible]

[illegible] ish and [illegible]

...ployment. By the late 1980's some 40 percent of ... people in the camp had jobs in Israel as menial ...kers, and unemployment in Gaza was relatively low. The pay was not great, but it allowed ...n to buy food, televisions, and refrigerators. ...Israeli authorities restricted the entry of ...sands of workers during the first uprising, ...a further curtailment when Arafat supported ...dam Hussein in the Gulf War, reversed ...ants. Unemployment is now 43 percent, up ...ercent from last year. The U.N. estimates ...one in three Palestinians lives on less than ...0 a day. Palestinian economist Samir Huleileh estimates that more than two thirds of the ...stinians in Gaza will be living below the ...erty line by the end of this year.

...he average family in the camp receives five ...s of lentils, five kilos of rice, five kilos of sugar, ...wo liters of cooking oil, and fifty kilos of flour ...nth from UNRWA. There are 837,750 registered refugees in the Gaza Strip, 54.6 percent of ...om (457,426) live in camps.

...Oslo meant almost nothing in practical terms ...he people in Khan Younis," Faqawi says. His ...ll yard is filled with children, as ubiquitous in ...n Younis as grains of sand. They stand barefoot, their faces dirty, as they watch us sip demitasse cups of coffee. The smaller ones wear only ...ed shirts. The children move in aimless bands ...ughout the camp, stealing, scavenging, cursing, smoking cigarette butts, and falling into rock-throwing wars. Wealthier Palestinians tend to ...ep their children indoors.

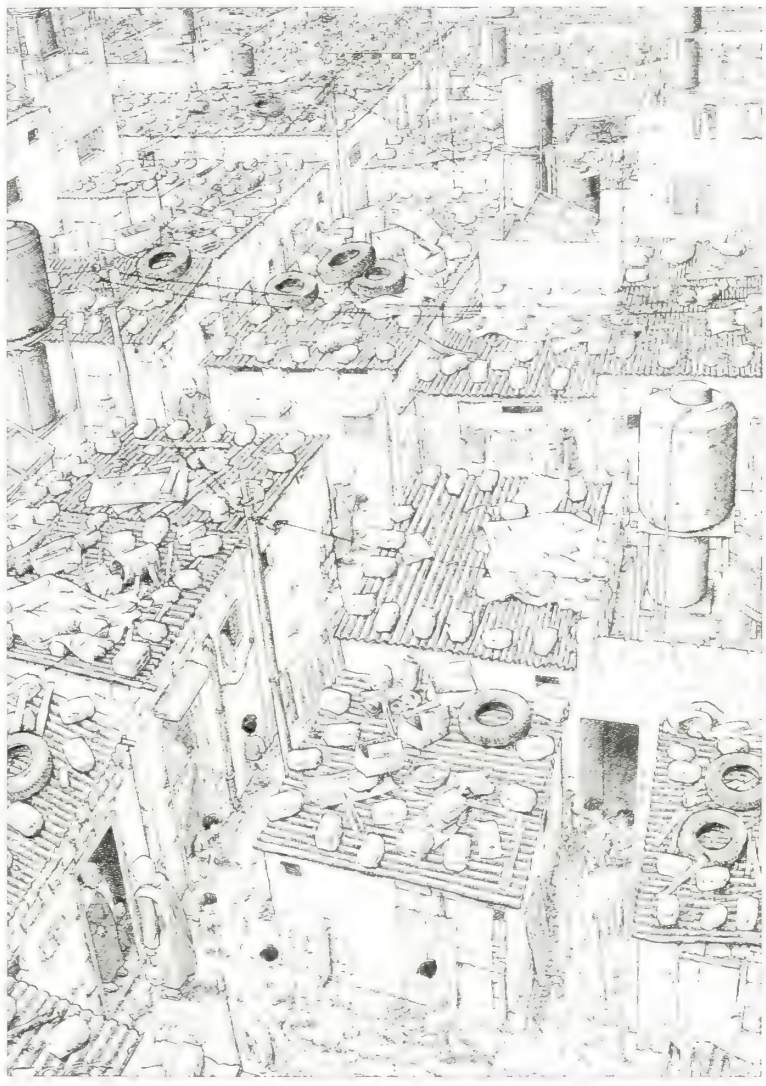
...Faqawi darts into his house and brings out a ...n pouch. He tenderly unfolds sepia documents. The papers, from the Government of ...estine, then a British mandate, permitted ...wi's father to sell tobacco and food in his ...cery in Jaffa. He holds out the Register of ...ds document, issued under the land settlement ordinance of 1928, that proves title to his ...er's house.

"Our house in Jaffa exists," he says, offering me ...paper. "I have all the documents. Two Iraqi ...sh families live there. I visited them in 1975. ...had coffee. They told me they knew it was my ...se. They said they had left four houses in Iraq. ...y told me to go to Iraq and take one."

...as a boy growing up in the camp Faqawi lived ...h his eight brothers in a tiny concrete shack. ...family built a new structure on the foundations ...he old one about fifteen years ago. The boys ...red one bedroom. He had no shoes, no schoolbooks, and was plagued by disease and insects.

"...N. officials would come to my elementary ...ool and tell us to open up our shirts," he says. ...ey would douse us with DDT. . . . When I saw ...ures in magazines of the way other people ...d I was jealous. I was especially jealous of ...dren who could have long hair. We could not let our hair grow because of the lice."

As we speak, the metallic thump of ... few blocks away, rips through the air. It, or one fired later, is sure to bring an Israeli response. Groups of Palestinian men and boys are already at the dunes throwing rocks at the Israeli jeeps patrolling the Gani Tal Jewish settlement. The soldiers will open fire and wound eight Palestinians,



five under the age of eighteen. At about the same time in Halhoul, a town north of Hebron in the West Bank, Israeli soldiers will wound seven Palestinians, including two medics. The shooting will take place as Palestinians try to dismantle a barricade built by Israeli ... on the main road leading into the town.

Faqawi goes into his house again, a cigarette dangling from his mouth, and returns with twisted scraps of Israeli munitions, including black, darthike needles known as flechettes. The fin-tailed flechettes are packed inside shells and spray out in a deadly mass when the shells detonate.

Three women in Gaza were killed by flechettes a few days ago.

Faqawi sighs. "We are seeing a lot of divorce, [illegible]

He looks at his two sons, who grimace when he speaks of compromise.

"[illegible] I can never say that the way to fight the Israelis is to blow ourselves up. I can't allow my children to think like this. I will always disagree with them."

He stops, his eyes weary.

"If I did agree," he says, "I could never tell them."

Saturday afternoon, June 17, the dunes

I sit in the shade of a palm-roofed hut on the edge of the dunes, momentarily defeated by the heat, the grit, the jostling crowds, the [illegible] the open-air [illegible] garbage. A friend of Azmi's brings me, on a tray, a cold glass [illegible]

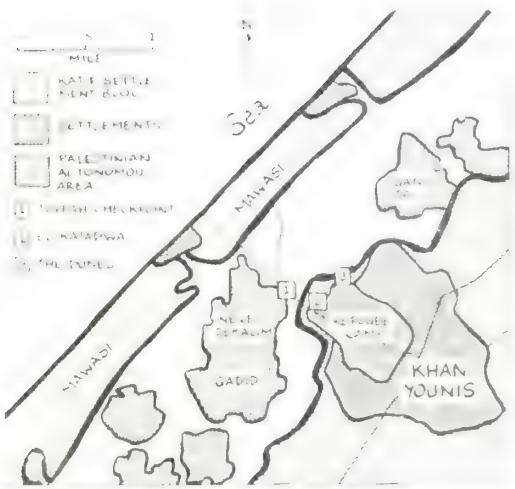
Barefoot boys, clutching kites made out of scraps of paper and ragged soccer balls, squat a few feet away under scrub trees. Men in flowing white [illegible] galabias [illegible] smoke cigarettes in the shade of slum eaves. Two emaciated donkeys, their ribs protruding, are tethered to wooden carts with rubber wheels.

It is still. The camp waits, as if holding its breath. And then, out of the dry furnace air, a disembodied voice crackles over a loudspeaker.

"Come on, dogs," the voice booms in Arabic. "Where are all the dogs of Khan Younis? Come! [illegible]"

I stand up. I walk outside the hut. The invective continues to spew: "Son of a bitch!" "Son of a whore!" "Your mother's cunt!"

The boys dart in small packs up the sloping dune [illegible] that separates the camp from the Jewish settlement. They lob rocks toward two armored jeeps parked on top [illegible] and mounted with [illegible] Three ambulances [illegible] Below [illegible] ation of what is [illegible]



A [illegible] percussion [illegible] The boys, most no more than ten or eleven years old, scatter, running clumsily across the heavy san They descend out of sight behind a sandbank [illegible] There are no sounds of gunfire. Th soldiers shoot with silencers. The bullets from t Molotov cocktails tumble end over end through the ch [illegible] bodies. Later, in the hospital, I w see the destruction: the stomachs ripped out, t gaping holes in limbs and torsos.

Yesterday at this spot the Israelis shot eig young men, six of whom were under the age eighteen. One was twelve. This afternoon they k an eleven-year-old boy, Ali Murad, and seriou ly wound four more, three of whom are un eighteen. Children have been shot in other co flicts I have covered—death squads gunned the down in El Salvador and Guatemala, mothe with infants were lined up and massacred in A geria, and Serb snipers put children in their sigh and watched them crumple onto the pavement Sarajevo—but I have never before watched s diers entice children like mice into a trap a murder them for sport.

We approach a Palestinian police post behi a sand hill. The police, in green uniforms, making tea. They say that they have given up trying to hold the children back.

"When we tell the boys not to go to the du they taunt us as collaborators," Lt. Ayman Gha says. "When we approach the fence with weapons to try and clear the area the Israelis on us. We just sit here now and wait for the w

Monday morning, June 19, Khan Yo

In the morning we attend the boy's funera is easy to find. Trucks with mounted lo speakers tour the camp urging resident attend and giving the street address. Goin funerals is a prerequisite of covering conflict have been to countless. In many places I have to inspect the bodies and faces to verify or ref claims of torture and mutilation.

The boy's father, Murad Abdel Rahman, st vacantly as he stands up from one in a long of purple plastic chairs placed in the street shakes the hands of mourners. Posters of his d son adorn the walls. Black flags of mourn green banners with Koranic verses, the yel flags of the Fatah militia, and signs from Pa tinian factions surround the white canopy that been spread out over the rutted, dirt street.

I shake his hand. I offer my condolences. incline our heads together to talk. The s body lies a few feet away.

It is hard to concentrate. The frail form of dead boy, wrapped in a shroud, reminds me o eleven-year-old son. I was in a room onc Kosovo with a mother and her children sh after her husband was murdered by the S The man's young son kept looking at the pl at his father on his identification card and w

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GARRETT G. FAGAN (Ph.D., McMaster University, 1993) is associate professor of history at the Pennsylvania State University in State College. A native of Dublin, Ireland, he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at Trinity College, Dublin, and was a Killam Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of British Columbia. Before joining the faculty at Penn State, he held teaching posts at McMaster University and York University in Canada, and at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill and Davidson College. Students at every institution consistently offered high praise for his courses in ancient history.

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me. I want, as then, to flee. I want to go home to

y truck, manned by militants, is parked at the c[illegible] of the street. The bearded Islamists in white robes wait to turn the funeral into a rally. The boy's body will be the prop. It is a familiar act. Martyrs, especially child martyrs, are a potent weapon in the hands of radical groups. It is hard to argue with death. Nationalists in Bosnia or Kosovo, insurgents in Central America, made a great show of funerals and the remains of those who were sacrificed for the cause.

The father says that he had no part in the decorations, which include posters of Saddam Hussein. He seems indifferent to the display. He speaks slowly, his puffy eyes and uncomprehending gaze giving the lie to the rhetoric of sacrifice and glory.

"This is what I worked so hard to prevent," he says, his voice hoarse and low. "I took Ali with me every day to my restaurant at 6:00 in the morning on al-Bahar Street. I made him promise he would not go to the dunes to throw rocks. Yesterday he asked to go home at 3:00. He said he had to study for the makeup sessions they are holding because of all the school closings this year. A half hour after he left people came running to tell me he was shot in the leg. I ran through the streets to the hospital. They would not let me in. They said he would be discharged soon. They told me he was okay. I forced my way inside and saw him lying in the corridor dead with a bullet hole in his heart. I fainted."

Several small boys stand glumly on the edge of the tent. They say they had called to Ali as he walked home to join them on the dunes.

"We all threw rocks," says Ahmed Moharb, ten. "Over the loudspeaker the soldier told us to come to the fence to get chocolate and money. Then they cursed us. Then they fired a grenade. We started to run. They shot Ali in the back. I won't go again. I am afraid."

During the funeral, sixteen-year-old Aadel Hussein al-Muqanman, who was wounded with Ali, is pronounced dead at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis. He was shot in the abdomen; the bullet severed his aorta. Aadel's fifteen-year-old brother, Hussein al-Muqanman, was killed by Israeli troops on November 22, 2000, at the Tuffah checkpoint at the edge of Khan Younis.

The [illegible] in the camp insist the Arabic accent is Lebanese. They believe that mercenaries from the South Lebanese Army, once a Christian proxy army for Israel and long a bitter foe of the Palestinians, have been integrated into the Israeli force. The word in Palestinian Arabic for [illegible] is never heard over the loudspeakers but rather the Lebanese word in Arabic, *atoohak*. And the Palestinians in the camp say that they can hear Lebanese music coming from the guard pos

Ali's small body is loaded onto the back truck. A cadre of young men, some bearded in robes, others dressed in black and wea wraparound sunglasses, march in three rows, automatic weapons pointed in the air, be the bier. The crowd of several hundred, eg on by the speakers mounted on the truck, c Islamic and anti-Israeli slogans.

"Mothers of Jews!" they shout. "We will n you weep like Palestinian mothers."

The truck, with a generator in the back to p er the loudspeakers, lumbers ahead of the pro sion. Posters are displayed of young martyrs, o holding clunky machine guns in front of a b drop of the al-Aqsa Mosque. These boys prob never owned a gun or saw the mosque in t lives. The chanting crowd passes the murals graffiti that smother the walls of the camp. shows an Israeli bus, marked by a Star of Da smashed and on fire. "Don't be merciful to t inside" reads the slogan underneath. "Blow it Hit it!" Hamas has signed the mural. Ano shows masked Palestinian gunmen, AK-47 sault rifles strapped to their backs, loading a tar to fire on a settlement. One mural sho pile of yellow skulls, all marked with a blue of David. On one wall the skeleton of a settle been painted hanging from a post. Nearby a hand thrusts a knife into the Star of David. M walls list the names of the thirty-seven Palest ans killed in Khan Younis since September.

Every new death pushes the voices of mo ation deeper into the background. Azmi, has Israeli friends, says he no longer speak them for fear of being branded a collabora Those moderates who keep open the channe communication are often the first to be silen by their own side. As in most conflicts, all dial has been reduced to a scream.

Monday afternoon, June 18, Khan Yo

Fahdi Abu Ammouna, thirteen, lies bed in the al-Amal Hospital, his propped up on a pillow. Dried blood ers the sheets. He says that some of his rock the army jeep, though I doubt he or any of friends could throw that far past the electric fe

"The soldier said over the loudspeaker those who wanted to live should run," he s "and those who wanted to die should stay. T they swore at us. They said everyone who liv Khan Younis is a dog. I started to run. I was s I never heard any shots. The bullet went thro both of my legs. I crawled to the ambulance. It the first time I went."

His mother, seated next to him and weari black head scarf, slowly shakes her head. goes every day," she says softly. "I sent my o son to bring him home. And he was not home

tes later. He would tell the boy, it is s, that we're stones and become a martyr not make the Israelis leave. My sister has son. My brother has lost a son. One of my s was killed and a cousin is dead. I tell them k at the history of our struggle. All these s achieve nothing."

e begins to talk about the first uprising, led to the Oslo peace agreement. Her hus-, Samir, stands in a blue shirt, white pants, andals at the end of the bed. He was a pris- then in Israel. One morning Israeli soldiers into her two-room house in the refugee while she was baking bread. Her son was six hs old. They turned the place upside down hrew the boy on the stove. He was severe- ned. As she speaks she gently places her tur- on his small arm, now hooked up to an in- nous tube.

fore we leave, we visit the office of Dr. Mah- l al-Madhoun, the hospital's director. He s us plastic bags filled with bullet fragments s taken out of his patients. All have the , the types of wounds, and the names of the ms printed neatly on the outside. Of the 0 killed and wounded, he says, 655 were un- he age of eighteen. He cannot understand soldiers would fire at children.

thirty years of practice," he says, "I have r treated a patient who died after being hit rock."

Tuesday, June 19, Mawasi

We want to spend a day in Mawasi, a Palestinian village cut off from Khan Younis and surrounded by the Israelis. the army press office in Jerusalem and ask mission for Azmi, Joe, and me to cross the h checkpoint at the edge of town. It is agreed we will be allowed to pass through the check- at 11:00 in the morning.

We walk down the sloping asphalt road to the Tuffah crossing. (*Tuffah* means "apple" in ic.) Behind me rises the El Katiba neighbor- ood. Mounds of rubble, the remains of thir- e houses demolished by Israeli bulldozers in , are interspersed with green tents and black ic water tanks mounted on wooden frames. was the first incursion by the Israelis into land had, under Oslo, been given back to the stinians.

ervous groups of Palestinians stand a few hun- e yards from the checkpoint. The slogan "We shield the al-Aqsa Mosque with our bodies the Zionist enemy" has been spray-painted e wall next to them. Straw, oil-covered sand, crushed soda cans litter the road. An Israeli opter passes noisily overhead.

e Palestinians wait for the loudspeaker order me forward in clusters of three. Only those who live in the [illegible] All must have special Israeli identity cards. As the group of three approaches the [illegible] house, all lift their shirts to show that they are not hiding weapons or explosives. They cannot pull up their coats to expose their arms. A dog trained to sniff out explosives roots among suitcases and boxes. Many Palestinians clutch clear plastic bags filled with tools for their jobs. They hold up the bags so that the soldiers can quickly inspect them.

Mohammed al-Magida wants to pick up vegetables grown by farmers in Mawasi. The tomatoes he loaded yesterday were left to cook in the sun by the Israelis and police. He has been here today for two hours. On the other side are crates he hopes to have passed to him by hand. But the soldier with the dog that sniffs the produce is not around.

"A lot depends on the mood of the dog," he tells me.

Many items, such as bags of cement and propane tanks, are simply banned. No vehicles, save those of the Israeli army, are permitted to drive back and forth. Pregnant women in labor who have to wait at the checkpoint often cannot get to the hospital in Khan Younis, say, three years. Births at the checkpoint. When someone dies in Mawasi the corpse must be carried across for burial in Khan Younis on someone's back.

"THE SOLDIERS ALL OVER THE LOUDSPEAKER THAT THOSE WHO WANTED TO LIVE SHOULD RUN," THE BOY SAYS, "AND THOSE WHO WANTED TO DIE SHOULD STAY"

Ibrahim Abu Awad, a dirty and disheveled boy of ten, pesters me for a shekel, and finally stands and stares into [illegible] asks him what he wants to do in life.

"Kill Jews," he says.

A soldier barks an order in Arabic over the loudspeaker for Azmi, Joe, and me to approach the post, one by one. We enter a corridor of plastic barrels filled with sand. We pass through a metal detector. Coils of concertina wire spread out around us. I hand our Israeli press cards through the slit in the guardhouse. The area around the guardhouse is blackened by soot. The fence is a tangled mass of wire. [illegible] a suicide bomber who blew himself up [illegible] in May. After the explosion an accomplice threw grenades at the soldiers [illegible]. The pictures of the two dead men cover the walls in Khan Younis.

Mawasi, with some 5,000 villagers, was split from Khan Younis in 1972 when the Israelis began to build the [illegible] settlements from a chain of eleven small settlements along the Gaza coast that include a tourist hotel, a golf course, and horse-riding trails. The Palestinians

...d ... modern highway that runs north and south—... for the Jewish settlers and the army—and ... travel along a one-lane asphalt track that runs ...allel to the main road. Mawasi has most of the ... farmland in the area. But the closure has ... the fields fallow. Khan Younis once depended on Mawasi for 80 percent of its produce, and some 60 percent of the crop used to be shipped to the Gulf states. Now only a pittance gets out.

Once through the checkpoint we proceed down the narrow lane past heaps of rotting garbage. For the last eight months, Israel has refused to allow the Khan Younis municipal authorities, which are in charge of garbage collection on this side as well, to cross Tuffah.

Relations between the Palestinians in Mawasi and the settlers have never been good. But last January, Palestinian gunmen murdered a settler and escaped in the settlement's ... The settlers then went on a rampage. The settlement appropriated another 200 dunams (about 45 acres) of land after the killing and erected an electric fence around the barren brown fields. Ahmed Moustafa al-Magida, an imposing ... [illegible] ... leaders in the village, insists that we take a look at the losses. We pile into his car and tour the area. All around us are confiscated fields, the blackened remains of Palestinian greenhouses, the charred hulks of tractors and farm carts. One Palestinian home has been gutted by fire. Electricity has been cut everywhere. Tonight, with the lights of the settlements shining above them, the residents of Mawasi will ... [illegible] ...

> HAMAS ALREADY RULES THE STREET. IF SHARON UNLEASHES ISRAEL'S MIGHT, AS IN LEBANON, THE PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY WILL BE HIS FIRST VICTIM

We decide to visit the beach, negotiating another Israeli checkpoint to do so. Mawasi has seen its fishing industry shut down. The small huts and shacks where Khan Younis residents once sat to drink Coke and swim in the surf are deserted. Fishing boats, the fiberglass hulls cracked from disuse, clutter the sand.

We come upon five fishermen who returned to their boats three days ago after eight months of being denied entry; the Israelis have promised to allow limited fishing near the coast.

"It has been eight months since my feet were wet," says Naim Kanan, forty, a well-built man in a yellow bathing suit. "I am ruined. I sold my ... [illegible] ... were married. All I hope now is that I can keep my boat."

Joe picks up a small shell on the sand and notices that it has a hole in it. We decide to make a necklace for my daughter. When Kanan se... searching in the sand, as well as Azmi's i... tience with our frivolity, he wades into the ... He scoops his hands into the water and em... with dozens of glistening white shells. He d... them into a plastic bag for us. Later, when th... raeli soldiers pull us out of the car, they will ... deep into this bag, not sure what to make o...

On our way back to Khan Younis, Joe a... stop at the settlement and peer through the ch... link fence at an Indian worker driving a tr... mower across a lawn, skirting the sprinklers ... ask the soldiers for permission to enter and are ... that we must speak with a settlement off... We stand in the sun, gazing at the emerald l... and the palm trees. Azmi waits for us down ... road at a bus stop. Finally we are handed bac... Israeli press cards and told to leave.

As we cross into Khan Younis, ambulance... leaving the dunes with eight more wounded ... under the age of eighteen.

Tuesday evening, June 19. Khan Y...

It is the end of the day, but we have ... plans to visit a factory. Nearly all comm... in Gaza has been shut down. The 12... Palestinian workers from Khan Younis who ... jobs in Israel and the 2,000 who worked in ... tlement factories are now unemployed. Th... expensive piecework done in Palestinian ... may still be sent abroad, but raw materia... longer arrive. The textile- and furniture-fa... floors are empty.

We find Abdullah Mousa al-Dosouki, ... one, just opposite the dunes, amid his se... machines and large spools of white thread. B... Israel closed off the strip, he employed ... people. He made uniforms for El Al, Israel ... tional airline, and for Bezek, the Israeli telep... company.

"Once the closure began we could not ... antee delivery, and we lost our contracts ... says. "I took out a $12,000 loan to buy nev... chines. I cannot pay it back. I had a good ... tionship with three Israeli companies. The... import from China."

As night comes on, Dosouki and his n... bors have an even more pressing concern: w... The water in Khan Younis, when it is avai... is salty and riddled with chlorine. Ten ... town's twelve wells do not meet World H... Organization purity standards. Because of t... olence at night, public-works employees ... refuse to man the pumping stations at the e... the settlement. In Mawasi many wells have ... completely dry, but the Israelis refuse to ... the villagers to drill new ones.

When I met a few days earlier with Osa... Farra, the mayor of Khan Younis, he explai... me why the Israelis chose to build a settle...



between Mawasi and Khan Younis. "It is the aquifers. In 1980 the Israelis began to They have thirty-two wells. They built a ine in 1994 to carry the water into Israel. e are probably about 1,000 people in the ement next to the camp, but they consume third of our water supply, though about 00 people live in Khan Younis."

is Arafat loyalist—he had a huge portrait of at on the wall behind his desk—said that in ral his city is nearly bankrupt. Revenues fallen from $250,000 to $80,000 since the ada began in September 2000. Salaries of he officials are paid only with assistance from Gulf states.

he mayor, who is fluent in English, was just n when his father was killed in the 1967 war. body was never found. He worries that the nt round of violence will lead, as it has in the to war.

"My five-year-old son was pretending to present news," he told me. "He began by saying that Palestinians had been killed by the Israelis to- His two-year-old brother, who wanted to threw himself on the floor and said he was rtyr."

Wednesday, June 20, Khan Younis

The mosque dominates camp life. Five times a day, including calls before dawn and after sunset, the amplified chant of the zzin lends a coherence and rhythm to exise here. Islam has squeezed out the secular, ureducated Palestinian leadership in Gaza. In es like Khan Younis, Arafat's Palestinian Auity bows to the militant's interpretation of n. There is no alcohol sold in the camp. There o cinemas. Women, even those who are not ious, find it prudent to walk the streets with heads covered. Special Islamic reconcilers setisputes and blood feuds. The militants, imbued religious zeal, are intolerant of anti-Islamic practices, but they are also widely respected for being honest, in stark contrast with Arafat's bloated and bribe-ridden government. Shop owners complain of having been forced to pay kickbacks to local Arafat officials in order to do business. Landlords say that Palestinian Authority officials rarely pay rent on stores or apartments. Many of Arafat's officials have set up lucrative businesses importing duty-free goods, including cars, and selling them at huge profits.

In the afternoon we visit the cramped office of an Islamic charity that provides food to families in Khan Younis. The room is filled with young bearded militants. A truck has backed up to a warehouse next door, and men are unloading sacks of flour, sugar, and rice, as well as red lentils, tea, macaroni, tomato paste, and corn oil. The charity, which raises its money in the Gulf states, is not officially tied to the militant Islamic group Hamas. But it is here, I have been told, that I will meet Sheikh Younis al-Astal, the camp's senior Hamas leader.

He enters dressed in a white robe. The men in the room fall silent. He speaks, as so many Hamas leaders do, in an even, gracious tone. He offers a cup of coffee.

Arafat loyalists in the camp, such as Faqawi, concede that Hamas is ascendant. If Oslo had led, as many had hoped, to a two-state solution, and thereby given Palestinians some glimmer of a better life, it is a fair bet that Hamas would be a marginal force in Gaza. But Israel's occupation and Arafat's mismanagement have made it only a matter of time before the militants come to power. They already rule the street. If Sharon unleashes Israel's might, as he did in Lebanon, the Palestinian Authority will be his first victim.

"What has happened since the Palestinian Authority came to power?" the sheikh asks. "Everyone is poorer. The Israeli occupation has not ended. Hardship always brings people back to God. It is time to [illegible] the Prophet,

become rich you think only of things. This kills

We feel as one body, in our dreams and our agony. And Islam distinguishes us in that it prepares people to die for the sake of Allah. They are always ready to die for Allah. They are ready to one weaker than they, even animals."

Hamas is primarily known outside Israel for The sheikh tells me that Hamas orders suicide Qassam, to attack Israeli civilian targets because Israeli troops and armed settlers routinely attack Palestinian civilians.

will stop."

From 1987 to 1993, during the first intifada, Hamas targeted only Israeli soldiers and settlements. It began to attack individual Israeli civilgunned down twenty-nine Muslim worshipers in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron. But these ming and weakening Arafat's authority, of exposing his helplessness in the face of settlement exPalestinians. Still, even the sheikh has used his time during Friday prayers to implore the young boys not to go out on the dunes.

"I know that every father tries to keep his children away from the fence," he says. "The teach- When I preach in the mosque I tell them to stay away. But these kids have no place to go. The only place to play is in the alleys or the dunes."

The gun battles on the rim of the camp at tah Hawks, who once battled Hamas activists for control of the street, now swap weapons and ammunition with their old foes. The factions march together at funerals. We meet next with one of the leaders of the gunmen who fire on the Israeli ty-one, leads the Ahmed Abu Rich brigade, which is made up of a couple dozen men. The group is house, a huge painting of his brother on the wall surrounded by three Palestinian flags.

prison. His parents died while he was incarcerated. He has no family left. He swings from polite conversation to a thinly veiled hostility. I am uneasy. passport when asked for identification to avoid being judged as an American. He writes down our

names and our passport numbers—Joe used Maltese passport—in a school notebook.

I have seen his type before in Bosnia, Kosthe Congo, and Central America. Driven by carrying an automatic weapon can bring to most. They are always looking for hostages, we are all spies. During the first intifada, a g of Fatah Hawks hauled Nancy Graph rapher Rina Castelnuovo and myself into a and accused us of working for Israeli security were lucky to talk our way out.

As often happens in such encounters, soon the one being interviewed. He asks me I think of the conflict, which Palestinians I met with, where I have been in Khan Yo and what I think of Israel. I mutter brief and answers. Odds are that the next time I arriv Gaza I will hear that this man has been kill

"I can't stand to see the children get shot says as we stand to leave. "I don't care abou others. But when the children get shot I can't take it. I feel like I am sixty."

Thursday, June 21, Khan Y

Sabha Abu Mousa, fifty-five, picks thr the shattered tiles and stones that were her home in the neighborhood of El K wa. She is searching for her daughter-in- two gold bracelets. She and her husband off packs of scavengers, most of them young

In one of the few gutted buildings that re standing after the April attack, a ceiling fa blades shredded, hangs tenuously by a wire what is left of the roof. The attack left the fi people who lived in this woman's small homeless. They have moved into two rooms unfinished housing project where they hav running water or electricity.

"My son is in an Israeli prison," she says, s ing near what's left of her refrigerator. " serving a ninety-nine-year sentence for k Jews. I saw him twenty days ago. Before that not seen him for seven months. We lost thr We lost my son's new bedroo niture. And we lost the two bracelets."

She pauses and looks toward the settlem

"All will vanish in the end except Allah says.

I pick up a child's notebook. It belongs t young boy who lived next door. It reads, ir ken English, "It's a pleasure to writ to you a long time and I hope you are fine and I wi it you in Jericho in the winter holiday becau weather is fine. I am looking forward to seein Remember to your family. Your cousin, A

The small boy's room, which he shared wi brothers, is now a pile of stone and plaster They is flowing away in the dunes, th

atch Jihad Abu Mousa, twenty-two, kick at
piece of rubble. He is
a busily cropped head
and a green shirt. He quit high school to
as one of the 2,000 Palestinian laborers in
ttlement. He earned $10 a day tending veg-
s in the greenhouses, arriving at work at 6:00
morning and leaving at 3:00.

hammed was shot dead by Israeli soldiers
, Jihad says, playing a game of soccer. Ju-
considered a security risk, lost his job.
worked for them for two years," he says.
, hot clean water, and electricity, not like us.
hey treated me well. I have nothing now."
stops, the familiar thousand-yard stare of de-
and incomprehension creeping across his
the look beaten into him, beaten into his fa-
and his father's father and
ren. I feel that will be true
oday or tomorrow," he says. "What does it
n when I die?"

Thursday afternoon, June 21, Jerusalem

oe and I cross back over Erez, our heavy
body armor slung over our shoulders. I pull
our bags behind us on the cart, which
ces over the pitted asphalt. We shove our
through the metal detectors. We give our
orts to a female Israeli soldier seated behind
g wooden counter. She hands each of us a
of paper. She tells us to carry the slips to the
t the vast, empty parking lot next to Erez. We
into an old taxi, which we have arranged
eet us, and start for Jerusalem. The wide ex-
of highway, the gleaming
restaurants
lys filled with vineyards and crops, seem
ngly untouched
s not long before the ancient Mercedes gives
The driver, an Israeli Arab, cannot budge it
f second gear. When he tries there is a loud
. The car shudders. The pace is excruciating.
does not want to let us go. He talks about
g met on the road by another car from his
pany, about waiting a little longer to see if the
k will come back to life, about how little we
to travel until things will be fixed. I lose my
nce. I insist he let
ay, where
assault rifles slung over their shoulders,
waiting for a ride.

e hitch a ride with two nuns in a van. The
's run health clinics in Gaza. They speak in
h, their accents
ngering
the banter reminds me of another era, when the

The afternoon light casts a soft golden glow
It is hard not to be moved by the city, by all that
share of zealots, those who killed in the name of
ten. They, too, be-
were faced with an
dilemma.
ed to dinner with a
friend, a surgeon,
in West Jerusalem. His father fled Vienna for
Palestine shortly after the Nazis took over Aus-
and no friends of the growing religious right.
They support the creation of a Palestinian state.
I worry about them every time a suicide bomb ex-

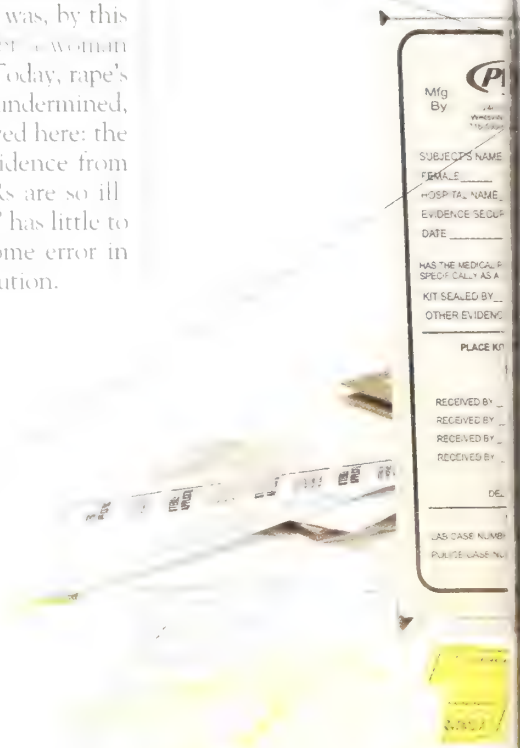
At the table I try to make them grasp, just for
a moment, what I felt watching the children on
washed." I concede the point, hoping only to im-
part the raw cruelty of what I saw. I try again. I
ter of Jerusalem. The night air is a welcome re-
lief after the summer's heat. I am glad to be alone.
I pass in and out of patches of light and dark cast
by the periodic streetlamps. My shoes are covered
ambiguities of life to Blacks and whites. It fills our
mundane days with passion. It promises to rid us
of our problems. When it is over many miss it. I
have sat in Sarajevo cafés and heard that, al-
though no one wished back the suffering, they all
yearned for the lost spirit of self-sacrifice and col-
lective struggle.
leaves behind a wasteland, irreconcilable grief. It
is a disease, and in the night air I smell its conta-
good along with the wicked. There will be no
stopping it. Pity will be banished. Fear will rule.

E
THE HAMAS LEADER, HAS USED HIS
TIME DURING FRIDAY PRAYERS TO
IMPLORE THE YOUNG BOYS NOT TO

BURDE

Too often, sexual-assault exams c

[R]ape . . . is an accusation easy to be made and hard to be proved, and harder to be defended by the party accused tho' never so innocent. [illegible] Sir Matthew Hale, a seventeenth-century English jurist renowned for his enlightened [illegible] was dictated to juries in most American rape trials up until the 1970s. Rape was, by this [illegible] to allege, with an accuser, to doubt: a woman crying rape, it warned, can never be unreasonable. Today, rape's official distinction as "hard to be proved" has been undermined, at least in principle, by the arsenal of science displayed here: the "rape kit," used by emergency rooms to gather evidence from victims of sexual assault. In practice, however, ERs are so ill trained in the use of these kits that a "party accused" has little to fear—nearly half of the kits arrive at labs with some error in gathering that can render them unusable in a prosecution.



This is New York's standard evidence kit for sexual assault; 7,000 are distributed each year to hospitals and emergency rooms statewide for use in forensic examinations. For a rape victim in the U.S. who hopes to bring her (or his) attacker to justice, undergoing such an exam is an invasive but necessary ordeal. The process lasts for two to four hours and is often conducted in cramped quarters, with no psychological coun[illegible] hours, so that her attacker's DNA, if found, can be differentiated from her own. Her hair and pubic hair are plucked—the root is needed—and her underpants are taken into custody. She should not drink water or rinse out her mouth, which, if she was forced to fellate her attacker, could contain DNA evidence. Nor should she urinate (more DNA to preserve) until the examiner has swabbed mouth, vagina, and rectum.

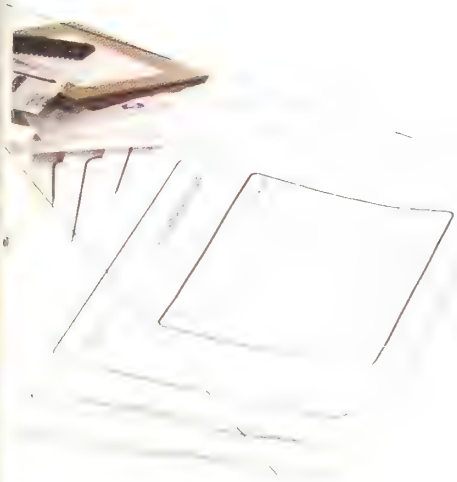
With such excruciating demands, the exam is intended to underpin a sturdy prosecution, and yet the kit's interview form is far from adequate for the task. It fails to ask how many assailants there were, whether the victim was orally, vaginally, or rectally assaulted, whether she was assaulted with a hand, penis, or other object. Nowhere does it ask if she displayed symptoms of being drugged—but this omission may not matter anyway—most police labs still lack the equipment required to test for "date-rape drugs," even as the prevalence of these drugs (especially GHB, a hypnotic sedative now ubiquitous in the nightclub scene) has increased dramatically in the last five years.

Examiners are expected to detail the victim's [illegible] juries—many of which, in a rape, are microsco[illegible] and occur in or around the vagina and anus—[illegible] crudely drawn four-inch figures with one-inch ge[illegible] tal insets. (The vulva, a common injury site, is rep[illegible] sented here by a Rice Krispie–size oval.) A typ[illegible] examiner may not even be able to see such [illegible] juries—most ERs lack a colposcope, a specialized [illegible] necological microscope able to discern nearly tw[illegible] as many genital abrasions as can the naked eye.

PROOF

injury, *by Jennifer Baumgardner*

The kit's box is packed to the brim even before the evidence is collected, after the exam is complete it can hardly be closed, much less sealed with the sticker that ensures against tampering. The abundance of items also makes it easy for examiners to skip a step or to misplace an element. The most [illegible] sight is the tablet to document injuries. [illegible] box's top, which attests that the evidence [illegible] cred to whom it is [illegible] left unattended with the victim [illegible] even more [illegible] hospital worker neglected [illegible] her vaginal swabs [illegible] DNA. The perpetrator, [illegible] only to attempted assault, and will be released in 2003.)



[illegible] thoroughly dried (underwear, swabs, jeans, and all [illegible] which a victim is [illegible] held or tampered with [illegible] kits nationwide that currently languish in storage, awaiting analysis. A federal law, passed last December, now offers funding [illegible] ture; some of the New York Police Department's 16,000 [illegible] DNA evidence exists, and five more have extended them.)

A nurse specifically trained in these exams will make few serious errors, but only 600 of the nation's more than 5,000 hospitals have one on staff. Pending federal legislation would fund the training [illegible] programs too complex to maintain, and medical schools rarely touch on the topic. For the victims of rape, then, this exam too often proves [illegible] attacker to prison but to wrest, from the crime of rape itself, the asterisk (*hard to be proved*) upheld both by the indifference of the medical establishment and by the enduring prejudices of the law. Consider that the cost of conducting this exam ($800 to $1,[illegible] rape was, in Hale's dubious assertion, "easy to be made," he

[illegible]nifer Baumgardner is the co-author of [illegible] *Young Women and Feminism and* [illegible]

ALL GOD'S CHILDREN CAN DANCE

By Haruki Murakami
Translated by Jay Rubin

Y

sible hangover. He could barely man-

ting away at his brain from the inside. If he ignored it, he wouldn't have a brain left. Which would be all right.

n. He felt too awful to sleep.

either. He must have tossed

cording to one friend. The shrill witch-hunter voices of the showbiz correspondents would bring up every last bit left in your stomach from the night

didn't have the strength to drag himself to the TV. Just breathing was hard enough. Random but persistent streams of clear light and white smoke swirled together inside his eyes, which gave him a strangely flat view of the world. Was this what it felt like to die? If so, fine. But once was enough. Please, God, he thought, never do this

"God" brought to mind his mother. He started to call out to her for a glass of water, but realized he was home alone. She and the other believers had left for Kansai three days earlier. It takes all kinds to make a world, and his

He still couldn't open his left eye. Who the hell could he have been drinking so much with? No way to remember. Just trying turned the core of his brain to stone. Never mind now; he'd think

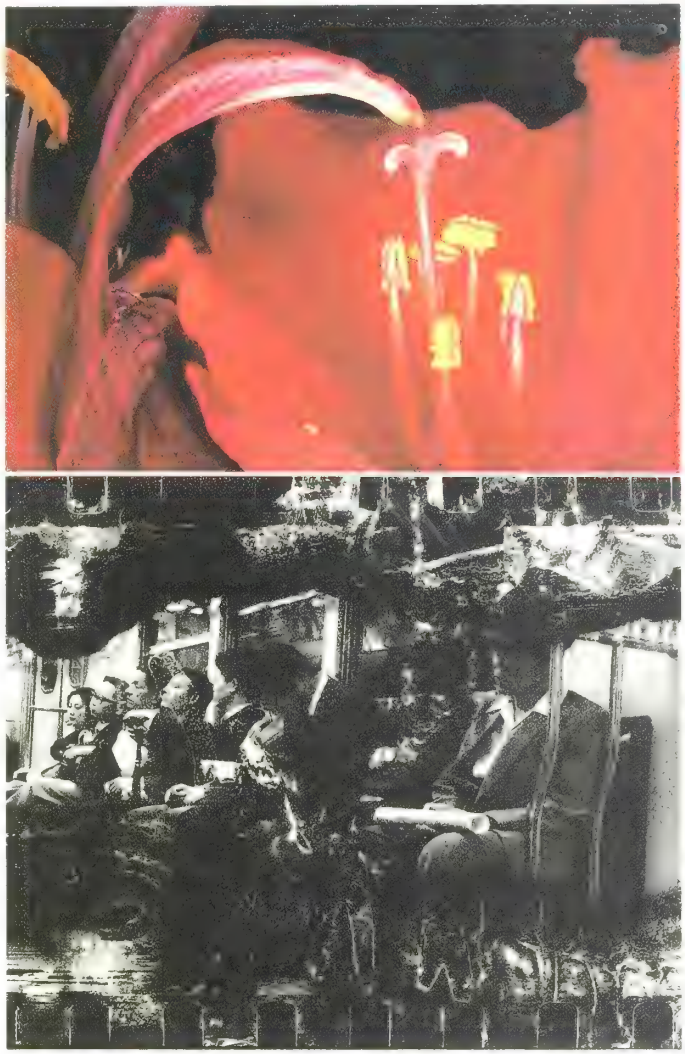
It couldn't be noon yet. But still, Yoshiya figured, judging from the glare of what seeped past the curtains, it had to be after eleven. Some degree of lateness on the part of a young staff member was never a big deal to his employer, a publishing company. He had always evened things out by working showing up after noon had earned him some sharp remarks from he wanted to avoid causing any problems for the believer who had re mended him for the job.

By the time he left the house, almost one o'clock. Any other d would have made up an excus taken off from work, but he ha document on disk that he had mat and print out today, and not a job that anyone else coul

He left the condo in Asagay he rented with his mother, took evated Chuo Line to Yotsuya, ferred to the Marunouchi Lin way, took that as far as Kasumig transferred again, this time to th biya Line subway, and got Kamiyacho, the station closest small foreign-travel-guide publ company where he worke climbed up and down the long of stairs at each station on wobbl

He saw the man with the m earlobe as he was transferring ba other way underground at Ka gaseki around ten o'clock that Hair half-gray, the man was some in his mid-fifties: tall, no glasses, overcoat somewhat old-fash briefcase in right hand. He w with the slow pace of someone thought, heading from the Hibi platform toward the the Chiyod Without hesitation, Yoshiya fel ter him. That's when he notice his throat was as dry as of old leather.

Yoshiya's mother was forty but she didn't look more than five. She had clean, classic goo



preventing her from carrying out the wild, self-destructive (but well-meaned) schemes she was always coming up with.

Plus, there was bound to be certain embarrassment if he were to announce all of a sudden that he was leaving home. He was sure it had never once occurred

his mother's mind that they might someday live apart. He recalled all too vividly the profound heartbreak and distress that she had experienced when he announced at the age of thirteen that he was abandoning the faith. For two solid weeks or more, she ate nothing, she said nothing, she never once took a bath or combed her hair or changed her underwear. She hardly even managed to attend to her period when it came. Yoshiya had never seen his mother in such a public and ugly

his mother, and she had told him again and again [illegible] referred to their god). "Our Lord must stay high up in Heaven. He can't be down here with us. But He is always watching over you, Yoshiya. He does have your best interests at heart."

Mr. Tabata, who served as little Yoshiya's special "Oniisan," would say the same kinds of things to him:

"It's true, you do not have a father in this world, and you're going to meet all sorts of people who say stupid things to you about that. Unfortunately, the eyes of most people are clouded and unable to see the truth, Yoshiya, but Our Lord, your father in the world itself. You are fortunate to live in the embrace of His love. You must be proud of that and live a life that [illegible]

"I know," responded Yoshiya just after he had entered [illegible] school. "But God [illegible] everybody, doesn't He? Fathers are different, though. Everybody has a different one. Isn't that right?"

[illegible] you to me, Yoshiya [illegible] Lord, you to [illegible] revealed Himself to you as yours and yours alone. You will meet Him when and where you least expect it. But if you begin to doubt or [illegible] faith, He may be so disappointed that He never shows Himself to you. Do you understand?"

"I understand."

"And you will keep in mind what [illegible] you?"

"I will keep it in mind, Mr. Tabata."

But in fact what Mr. Tabata was telling him did not make much sense to Yoshiya because he could not be

man, and very young, and after the

and I should also be concerned about

sure to use a condom, and he gave me

"I told him that I *had* used condoms, so he said, 'Well, then, someone didn't put them on right. It's amazing how few people know the right way to use them.' But I'm not stupid. I was being very careful about contraception. The minute we took our clothes off, I would be sure to put it on the man myself. You can't trust men with something like that. You know about condoms, I hope?"

Yoshiya said that he did know about condoms.

"So, two months later I got pregnant again. I could hardly believe it: I was being more careful than ever. There was nothing I could do but go back to the same doctor. He took one look at me and said, 'I *told* you to be head of yours." I couldn't stop crying. I explained to him how much care I had taken with contraception whenever I had knowledge, but he wouldn't believe me. 'This would never have happened if you put them on right,' he said. He was *mad*.

"Well, to make a long story short, about six months later, because of a weird series of circumstances, I ended up having knowledge of the doctor himself. He was thirty at the time, and still a bachelor. He was kind of boring to talk to, but he was a nice man. His right earlobe was missing. A dog chewed it off when he was a boy. He was just walking along the street one day when a big black dog he had never seen before jumped up on him and bit his earlobe off. He used to say he was glad it was just an earlobe. You could live without an earlobe. But a nose would be different. I had to agree

"Being with him helped me get my old self back. When I was having knowledge of him, I managed not to think disturbing thoughts. I even got to like his half-size ear. He was such a serious man, he would lecture me on the use of the condom while we were in bed—like when and how to put it on and when and how to take it You'd think this would make for proof contraception, but I ende pregnant again."

Yoshiya's mother went to see doctor-lover and told him she see to be pregnant. He examined her confirmed that it was so. But he w not admit to being the father. He a professional, he said; his contra tive techniques were beyond repro Which meant that she must have relations with another man.

"This really hurt me. He made m angry when he said that, I coul stop shaking. Can you see how de this would have hurt me?"

Yoshiya said that he did see.

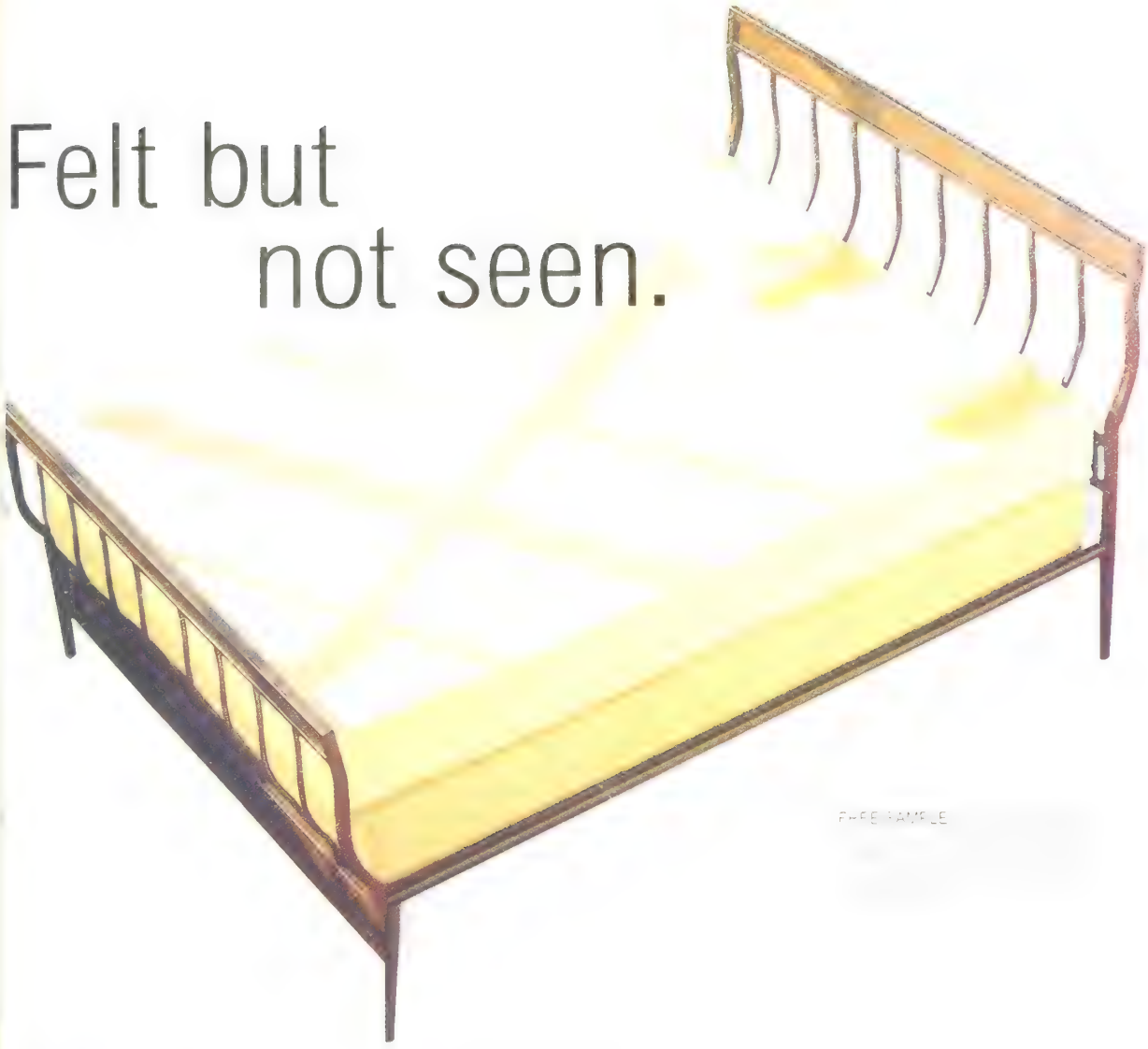
"While I was with him, I *never* knowledge of another man. Not o But he just thought of me as some of young slut. That was the last I of him. I didn't have an abortio ther. I decided to kill myself. A would have. I would have gotten boat to Oshima and thrown m from the deck if Mr. Tabata ha seen me wandering down the s and spoken to me. I wasn't the lea afraid to die. Of course, if I *had* then, *you* would never have been into this world, Yoshiya. But than Mr. Tabata's guidance, I have bec the saved person you know me a day. At last, I was able to find the light. And with the help of the o believers, I brought you into

To Yoshiya's mother, Mr. Ta had had this to say:

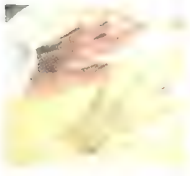
"You took the most rigorous traceptive measures, and yet you came pregnant. Indeed, you bec pregnant three times in a row. Do imagine that such a thing could pen by chance? I, for one, do no lieve it. Three 'chance' occurre are no longer 'chance.' The figure t is none other than that which is by Our Lord for revelations. In o words, Miss Osaki, it is Our Lord's for you to give birth to a child. child you are carrying is not just one's child, Miss Osaki: it is the c of Our Lord in Heaven, a male c and I shall give it the name of Yosh 'For it is Good.'"

And when, as Mr. Tabata predi a boy child was born, they named Yoshiya, and Yoshiya's mother l

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t Our Lord's will!"

that was the obstetrician. There had been something wrong with the condom. Anything else was out of the question.

"Does the doctor know that you gave birth to me?"

"I don't think so," said his mother. "I never saw him again, never contacted him in any way. He

The man boarded the Chiyoda Line train to Abiko. Yoshiya followed him into the car. It was after 10:30 at night, and there were few other passengers on the train. The man took a seat and pulled an open magazine from his briefcase. It looked like some sort of professional journal. Yoshiya sat down across from him and pretended to read the newspaper he was carrying. The man had a slim build and a deeply chiseled face with an earnest expression. There was something doctorish about him. His age looked right, and he was missing one earlobe—the right ten off by a dog.

Yoshiya felt with intuitive certainty that this man had to be his biological father. And yet the man probably had no idea that this son of his even

all, the doctor was a professional whose contraceptive methods were beyond reproach.

Ochanomizu, Sendagi, and Machiya subway stops before rising to the surcreased at each station. The man never looked up from his magazine or gave

his seat. Observing him between Yoshiya brought back fragments of what he had done the night before. He had gone out to drink in Roppongi with an old college friend and two girls that the friend knew. He remembered going from the bar to a disco, but he couldn't recall whether or not he had had sex with his date. Probably not, he decided. He had been too had such out of the question.

The human-interest page of the paper was filled with the usual earthquake stories. His mother and the other believers had probably been staying in the church's Osaka facility. Each morning they would cram their rucksacks full of supplies, go as far as they could by commuter train, and walk along the rubble-strewn highway the rest of the way to Kobe, where they would distribute daily necessities to victims of the quake. She had told him by phone that her pack weighed as much as thirty-five pounds. That place felt light-years away from Yoshiya himself and from the man sitting across from him absorbed in his magazine.

Until he graduated from elementary school, Yoshiya used to go out with his mother once a week on missionary work. She got the best results of anyone in the church. She was so young and lovely and seemingly well-bred (in fact, she *was* well-bred) that people always liked her. Plus she had this little boy with her. Most people would let down their guard in her presence. They might not be interested in religion, but they were willing to listen to her. She would go from house to suit, distributing pamphlets and calmly extolling the joys of faith.

"Be sure to come see us if you ever have any pain or difficulties," she would tell them. "We never push, we only offer," she would declare, voice warm, eyes burning. "In my own case, deepest darkness until the day I was saved by our teachings. I was carrying the brink of throwing myself and him in the ocean. But I was saved by His

now my son and I live in the hol of Our Lord."

Yoshiya had never found it p to knock on strange doors wi mother. She was especially sw him at those times, her hand warm. They had the experience ing rebuffed often enough that it him all the more joyful to rec kind word. And when they mana win a new believer for the chu filled him with pride. "Maybe no my father will recognize me as hi he would think

Not long after he went on to dle school, though, Yoshiya aban his faith. As he awakened to th tence of his own independent e found it increasingly difficult cept those stern codes of the s clashed with normal values. Th one major reason for his loss of But the most fundamental and d cause was the unending cold the One who was his father: H heavy, silent heart of stone. He abandonment of the faith was a of deep sadness to Yoshiya's m but his determinati unshakable.

The train was almost out of and just a station or two from c into Chiba Prefecture when th put his magazine back into his case, stood up, and approach door. Yoshiya followed him train. The man flashed a pass through the gate, but Yoshiya wait in line to pay the extra this distant point. Still, he man reach the line for cabs just as th was stepping into one. He c into the next cab and pulled a new 10,000-yen bill from his w

"Can you follow that cab for asked.

The driver gave Yoshiya a cious look. Then he eyed the

"Hey, man, is this some kind thing?"

"Not at all. Don't worry," Y said. "I'm just tailing somebod

The driver took the 10,000 and pulled away from the curb. "I he said, "but I still want my fa meter's running."

The two cabs sped down a b shuttered shops, past a number empty lots, past a hospital wit

…adows, and through a new side …ment lined with tiny houses. The … all but empty, the taxi posed no …ms—and provided no thrills. …a's driver was clever enough to …e distance between his cab and …ne in front.

…y having an affair or some-…"

…h," said Yoshiya. "Head-hunt-…wo companies fighting over one …

…kidding? I knew companies …crambling for people these days, …dn't realize it was this bad."

…w there were hardly any houses …the road, which followed a river- …and entered an area lined with …ies and warehouses. The only …marking this deserted space were …ight poles thrusting up from the …. Where a high concrete wall …hed along the road, the taxi car- …the man came to a sudden stop. …ed by the car's brake lights, …ya's driver brought his cab to a …ome hundred yards behind the … vehicle and doused his head- …. The mercury-vapor lamps over- cast their harsh, silent light on …phalt roadway. The road and the … there was nothing else here to …ar ahead, the cab door opened … the man with no earlobe got out. …ya slipped his driver two 1,000- …ills beyond his initial 10,000-yen …ent.

…u're never gonna get a cab way …ere, mister. Want me to wait a lit- …ile?" the driver asked.

…ever mind," said Yoshiya and …ed outside.

…he man never glanced up after …g his cab but walked straight … beside the concrete wall with …me slow, steady pace he had used …e subway platform. He looked … well-made mechanical doll be- …awn ahead by a magnet. Yoshiya … his coat collar and released an …onal white cloud of breath from …up between the edges as he fol- … the man from far enough be- …to keep from being spotted. All he … hear was the anonymous slap- …of the man's leather shoes against …avement. Yoshiya's rubber-soled …rs were silent.

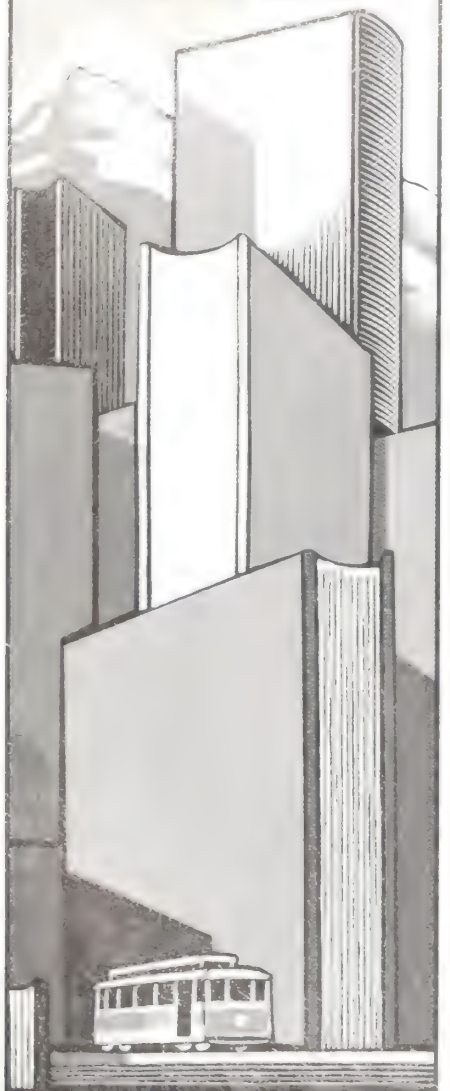
…ere was no hint of human life … The scene looked like something from a fantastic dream. Where the concrete wall ended there was an automobile scrap yard. A chain-link fence surrounded a hulk of car that had been reduced to a single colorless mass by long exposure to the rain and the flat mercury light. The man continued walking straight ahead.

What was the point of getting out of a cab in such a deserted place? Yoshiya wondered. Wasn't the man heading home? Or maybe he wanted to take a little detour on the way. The February night was too cold for walking, though. A freezing wind …

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light never made its way to this separate world. Yoshiya had only the sound of the man's shoes to go by. The [illegible] at the same unbroken pace. And then they stopped.

Could the man have sensed that he was being followed? Was he standing still now, holding his breath, straining [illegible] Yoshiya's heart shrank in the darkness, but he swallowed its loud beating and pressed on. "To hell with it," he thought. "So what if he screams at me for following him? I'll just tell him the truth. It could be the quickest way to set the record straight." But then the alley gave out. It was a dead end, closed off by a sheet-metal fence. Yoshiya took a few seconds to find the hole, an opening where someone had bent the metal back just enough to let a person through. He gathered the skirts of his coat around him and squeezed through.

A big, open space spread out on the other side of the fence. It was no empty lot but some kind of playing field. Yoshiya stood there, straining to see in the pale moonlight. There was no sign of the man.

It was a baseball field, and Yoshiya was standing somewhere way out in center field amid a stretch of trampled-down weeds. Bare ground showed through like a scar in the place where the center fielder usually stood. Over the distant home plate, the backstop soared like a set of black wings. The pitcher's mound lay closer to hand, a slight swelling of the earth. The high metal fence ringed the entire outfield. A breeze swept across the field, carrying with it an empty potato-chip bag.

Yoshiya plunged his hands into his coat pockets and held his breath, waiting for something to happen. But nothing happened. He surveyed right field, then left field, then the pitcher's [illegible] feet before looking up at the sky. Several chunks of cloud hung there, the moon tinging their hard edges a strange color. A whiff of dog shit mixed with [illegible]

gone. He had disappeared with trace. If Mr. Tabata had been he would have said, "So you see, Yos Our Lord reveals himself to us i most unexpected forms."

But Mr. Tabata had died three earlier, of urethral cancer. His months of suffering had been exc ating to see. Had he never once that time tested God? Had he once prayed to God for some sm lief from his terrible pain? Mr. T had observed those harsh comm ments with such rigor and lived in intimate contact with God that all people, was qualified to make prayers (concrete and limited i though they might be). And be thought Yoshiya, if it was all rig God to test man, why was it wro man to test God?

Yoshiya felt a faint throbbi his temples, but he could not this was the remains of his han or something else at work. W grimace, he pulled his hands his pockets and began taking slow strides toward home plate. seconds earlier, the one thing mind had been the breath-sto pursuit of a man who might w his father, and that had carrie to this strange place. Now th man had disappeared, howeve importance of the acts tha brought him this far turned suc unclear inside him.

What was I hoping to gain this? Yoshiya asked himself strode ahead. Was I trying to c the ties that make it possible f to exist here and now? Was I h to be woven into some new p be given some new and bett fined role to play? No, he th that's not it. What I was chas circles must have been the tail darkness inside me. I just hap to catch sight of it, and follow and clung to it, and in the enc fly into still deeper darkness. I' I'll never see it again.

Yoshiya's spirit now lingered stillness and clarity of a particula in time and space. So what if th was his actual father, or God, o unrelated individual who jus pened to have lost his right earl no longer made any difference t and this in itself had been a m

...rsatement. Was it something ...ebrate?

...limbed the pitcher's mound ...anding atop its worn rubber, ...ed himself to his full height. He ...ined his fingers, thrust his arms ...nd, sucking in a lungful of cold ...air, looked up once more at the ... It was huge. Simple plank ...ers ran the length of the first- ...rd-base lines. They were empty ... course it was the middle of a ...ry night. Three levels of straight ... seats stood there in long, chilly ... Windowless, gloomy buildings ... kind of warehouses, probably— ...ed together beyond the back- ...No light. No sound.

...nding on the mound, Yoshiya ... his arms up, over, and down ...e circles. He moved his feet in ...with this, ahead and to the ... As he went on with these ...like motions, his body began to ... and to recover the full senses ...ving organism. Before long he realized that his headache was all but gone.

The girlfriend he had had through- ...is college years called Yoshiya ... Frog," because he looked like a ...frog when he danced. She loved ...ce and would always drag him ... discos. "Look at you!" she used ... "I love the way you flap those ...arms and legs of yours! You're ... frog in the rain!"

...s hurt the first time he heard ...t once he had been with her ...enough, Yoshiya himself began ...joy dancing. As he let himself ...d moved his body in time to ...usic, he came to have a deep ...s that the natural rhythm inside ...was pulsing in perfect unison ... he basic rhythm of the world. ... ebb and flow of the tide, the ...ong of the wind across the ...is, the course of the stars ...gh the heavens: he felt certain ...these things were by no means ...tring in places unrelated to him. ...e had never seen a penis as huge ..., his girlfriend used to say, tak- ...ld of it. Didn't it get in the way ... he danced?' No, he would tell ... never got in the way. True, it ...ways been on the big side, from ...me he was a boy. He could not recall it ever having been of any great advantage to him, though. In fact, several girls had refused to have sex with him because it was too big. In aesthetic terms, it just looked slow and clumsy and stupid. Which is why he had always done his best to keep it hidden. "Your big wee-wee is a sign," his mother used to tell him with absolute conviction. "It shows that you're the child of God." And so he believed it, too. But then one day the craziness of it hit him. All he had ever prayed for was the ability to catch outfield flies, in answer to [illegible]

What kind of world allow[illegible] otic bargains?

Yoshiya took off his glas[illegible] slipped them into [illegible] eyes closed, and feeling the white light of the moon on his skin, he began to dance all by himself. He [illegible] breath deep into his lungs and exhaled just as deeply. Unable to think of a song to match his feelings, he danced in time with the stirring of the grass and the flowing of the clouds. Before long he began to feel that someone's

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eyes were fixed on him. He sensed a [illegible] he thought. Let them look if they want to. All God's children can dance.

He trod the earth and swirled his arms, each graceful movement calling forth the next in smooth, unbroken links, his body tracing diagrammatic patterns and impromptu variations, with invisible rhythms behind and between rhythms. At each crucial point in his dance, he could survey the complex intertwining of these elements. Animals lurked in the forest like trompe l'oeil figures, some of them horrific beasts he had never seen before. He would eventually have to pass through the forest, but he felt no fear. Of course the forest was inside him, and it made him who he was. The beasts were ones that he himself possessed.

How long he went on dancing, Yoshiya could not tell. But it was long enough to start him perspiring under the arms. And then it struck him what it was that lay far down in the earth upon which his feet were so firmly planted: the ominous rumbling of the deepest darkness, secret rivers that transported desire, slimy creatures writhing, the lair of earthquakes ready to transform cities into mounds of rubble. These, too, were helping to create the rhythm of the earth. He ceased his dancing and, catching his breath, stood at the mound and beneath his feet as though peering into a bottomless hole.

Yoshiya thought of his mother far away in the ruined city. What would happen to her now, if he could step [illegible] and go to meet his mother in her youth when her soul was in its deepest state of darkness? No doubt they would plunge as one into the muck of bedlam and devour each other in acts for which they would be dealt the harshest punishment. "And what of it? 'Punishment?' I was due for punishment long ago. The city should have crumbled to bits all around me long ago."

His girlfriend had asked him to marry her when they graduated from college. "I want to be married to you, Super-Frog. I want to live with you and [illegible] everything like that."

"I can't marry you," Yoshiya had said to her. "I know I should hav you this, but I'm the son of (can't marry anybody."

"Is this true?"

"It is true. I'm sorry."

Yoshiya knelt down and scoo a handful of sand, which he allo slip back to earth between his f He did this again and again. The uneven touch of the earth rem him of the last time he had he Tabata's emaciated hand.

"I won't be alive much l Yoshiya," said Mr. Tabata in a that had grown hoarse. Yoshiya to protest, but Mr. Tabata stopp with a gentle shake of the head

"Never mind that," he said. life is nothing but a short, p dream. Thanks to His guidance, made it this far. Before I die, t there is one thing I have to tell shames me to say it, but I h choice. I have had lustful thoug ward your mother any number o As you well know, I have a fami I love with all my heart. An mother is a pure-hearted pers still, I have had violent cravi her flesh—cravings that I have been able to suppress. I want your forgiveness for that."

"There is no need for you anyone's forgiveness, Mr. Tabat are not the only one who has h ful thoughts. Even I, her son been pursued by terrible obses Yoshiya wanted to open him this way, but he knew that all it do would be to upset Mr. Tabat more. Yoshiya grasped Mr. T hand and held it for a long tim ing that the thoughts in his would communicate themselv his hand to Mr. Tabata's. Our are not stones. A stone may grate in time and lose its outwar But hearts never disintegrate have no outward form, and, w good or evil, we can always c nicate them to one another. T day, Mr. Tabata drew his last

Kneeling on the pitcher's Yoshiya gave himself up to the time. Somewhere in the dista heard the faint wail of a siren. of wind set the leaves of grass t ing and celebrated the grass's s fore it died.

"Oh, God," said Yoshiya al

EW BOOKS

Guy Davenport



ight years after Gutenberg's invention of movable type, King Charles VII of France sent one las Jenson to Mainz to see what business of printing was all about. n never returned. He heard in enberg's workshop that the real tion was in Venice, where he de- d the typeface you are looking at n you read Garry Wills's VENICE: N CITY OF THE RELIGION OF I (Simon & Schuster, $35). Aldo uzio's Aldine Press, which popu- d Jenson's roman type, was a foun- head of the Renaissance, printing reek and Roman classics, the in Hebrew and Greek, and text- s for university students in law medicine. His trademark, a dol- twined around an anchor, was ained by Erasmus: *festina lente*, e haste slowly" (first dolphin, ast anchor), and is still a favorite e with European and American fishers. It is both an excellent mot- r setting type and an apt emblem e conservative but lively evolution enetian history.

her 1,510 years Venice has gone being an offshore redoubt in the Adriatic, built on piles driven into a marsh (safe from horse-riding barbarians), to a theme park for tourists, who come to see the canals and gondolas. In between, Venice was the West's most beautiful city, a work of art in itself, compounded of churches and palaces, artists' and artisans' studios, print-shops and glassworks, public sculpture rivaling that of ancient Athens and Rome. Professor Wills ends his history in the early seventeenth century, with the Council of Trent, which draws a line between Renaissance and Reformation Europe. The Venice of Proust and Henry James, of Gabriele D'Annunzio and Thomas Mann, has been recorded by other writers.

Professor Wills's Venice is indescribably rich, coming as it does under the French ideal of total history—politics, religion, daily life, art, architecture, wars, and men and women who seem to have walked out of Shakespeare. It is the religious gentleness of Venice that Wills finds most interesting: the centrality of the body of St. Mark the Evangelist (brought to the city in 828 and enshrined not in a cathedral but in the Doge's Palace, the most [illegible] palace in Europe), [illegible] processions around the church year, other saints and holy relics. Whereas Ruskin saw Venetian luxury as dissolute, Garry Wills sees it as [illegible] and high spirits. Where Ruskin saw greed, Wills sees power. Venetians knew that they were the "favorites of Christ, Mary and Saint Mark."

Across the Adriatic from Venice lies Trieste, a kind of country cousin, even more ancient, also in the shipping business. It was once the seaport for Vienna, and once many other things, a city hyphenating Yugoslavia and Italy, a city favored by refugees, a comic-opera city where Franz Lehar conducted the municipal band, where Joyce wrote *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Exiles*, and a large part of *Ulysses*. Trieste is nested between the sea and the mountains, from which an awful wind called the bora blows. It was when facing the full blast of this wind that Rilke wrote the first Duino Elegy, shouting into an imaginary rush of angels.

Jan Morris sees Trieste as the ideal city. It has no serious allegiances to any country. It recovered from Hitler as politely as it entertained Mussolini. It has two useful languages, many nationalities, a love of books and music. Joyce praised it as "the kindest city." Jan Morris first saw it [illegible] Second World War, when she was James Morris and a British soldier. She has made a special study of it over the years, soaking it in an ever deeper nostalgia, and this last of her books (she says), TRIESTE [illegible] (Simon & Schuster, $20), is a coda to the books she has written, and written well, about other cities (Sydney, Hong Kong, Oxford, Edinburgh).



Amir D. Aczel, historian of science, [illegible]

COLD VERITIES

The chilly ethics of American pragmatism

By Lee Siegel

The Metaphysical Club, by Louis Menand. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 544 p

Pragmatism is an American product with a simple heart. Its animating principle is that truth is social and constructed rather than transcendent and objective. It holds that ideas prove their worth in action, and that the results of an idea are the best criteria by which to judge its merit. And since what works for me might not work for you, pragmatism advocates a strenuous openness to all perspectives. With its insistence on the fusion of being and doing, thought and action, pragmatism has one foot in academe and the other in everyday life. It is philosophy in running shoes.

Louis Menand is the sole contributing editor to *The New York Review of Books*, a staff writer at *The New Yorker*, and a professor of literature at City University of New York. Given that he is arguably the most prominent thinker and doer in American literary life, he and pragmatism seem a match made in intellectual heaven. And in fact *The Metaphysical Club* is partially an argument for the value of American pragmatism folded into a [illegible] history of ideas; it is the labor of love, the result of ten years of work on a subject that must not have promised huge commercial rewards, let alone great filmic possibilities. (The book's first published crystallization appeared in 1997, as the introduction to *Pragmatism: A Reader*, a book also edited by Menand.) Like Edmund Wilson, to whose mantle he is heir at *The New Yorker*, Menand has a fine, beautiful mind, which appears to be in the grip of a fertile obsession (in Wilson's case, and for a good part of his ca[reer] it was socialism).

Because Menand has written so [much] and for so long, and for such dis[tin]guished venues, many people [have] been eagerly waiting for him to pro[duce] an important book. The appear[ance] of *The Metaphysical Club* has ac[cord]ingly been greeted with hosannas [and] applause. Critics have been espec[ially] emphatic in hailing Menand's the[sis] that pragmatism arose out of di[s]sionment with postures of moral[ab]titude, a disillusionment spawne[d] the devastations of the Civil War[—]an original historical argument. [The] warm reception is as it should be w[hen] a major writer gives the world the [fruit] between hard covers, of his sust[ained] thinking.

But although *The Metaphysical* [Club] takes as its subject a highly influe[ntial] school of thought, and although it[s] thor is an immensely intelligent [man] possessed of a distinct vision o[f] Menand's book has elicited al[most] nothing in the way of critical resp[onse]. This is decidedly not as it shou[ld] when a major writer gives the w[orld] the gift of his sustained thinking. W[ithout] out a critical response, Menand's [book] becomes a brief occasion, not a la[sting] contribution; sentenced to early [death] by praise, it ends up isolated fro[m] currents of literature and historic[al] perience that it rises from and [com]ments on—an ironic fate for a [book] on pragmatism. Louis Menand is [a] ure of authority and influence and [pre]tigious connections, but that is n[o] son not to take him seriously.

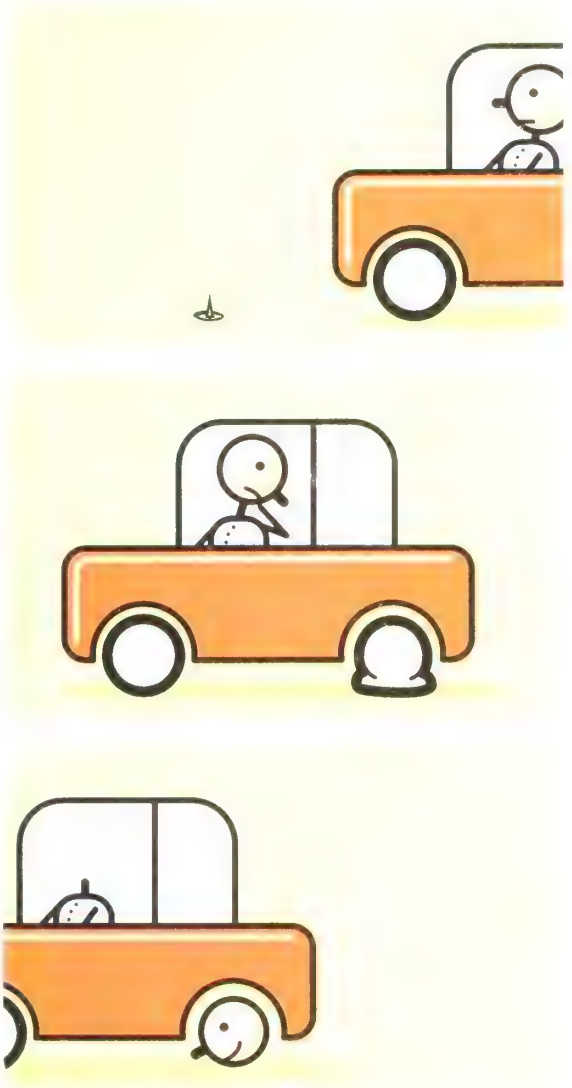
The Metaphysical Club is an [ele]dantly layered work, and the first [one] to this writer's knowledge, th[at] tempts to draw together pragma[tism]

tellectual currents and their influence on American life. It inspired structures as well: I wants to prove the integrity ..tatism's ideas concerning the lity of truth by illuminating the ship between the philosophy's tors and their situations o show, in other words, ulosophy whose central olds that truth is social ucted was itself social rated and shaped.

and has produced a rich ed work of impressive hip and research. He has en us something of a ccasionally even pro- muddle. Menand has leaving anything out; ative is almost neuroti- clusive, often wandering y amid its many currents, bogged down in the ect of academic politics c niche, or in the recita- chains of influence and on. Yet in a book driven pragmatist spirit of re- y to every perspective, ws might be considered of stylistic *coup de* What is unequivocally ng about *The Metaphysi- Club* is that, bursting with insignificant detail, it s so many highly signif- missions.

ng the most glaring of Edmund Wilson's great *Gore*, which appeared at the height of the War. By that time, Wil- long forsworn his Stal- llow-traveling and had into an eccentrically ked libertarian who re- pay his taxes. Not sur- y, *Patriotic Gore* sported a very introduction. In it, Wilson e- o moral distinction between erican political system and the me. Indeed, he compared Lin- Lenin. For Wilson, the erst- arxist, all declarations of high, values based on abstract, gen- ths masked the desire to con- stroy, and expand.

omic and political forces drove il War, Wilson believed, and they loomed more significant than moral certitude in explaining the war's outcome. Slavery, he argued, was the country's most consequential legal fiction—a



murder and expropriate. It was the Civil War, Wilson argued, that ushered [illegible] beyond the moral nihilism of [illegible] become deliberate and principled. Before the war, Americans [illegible] contain no [illegible] but little [illegible] Wilson's words, [illegible] currents of [illegible] moved much [illegible] one's system always set up in [illegible] [illegible] Holmes's [illegible] toward the Civil War. . . . [H]e never, even [illegible] way to moral indignation."

Holmes never questioned the right of the dominant group to rule as a result of its victory over the opposition. There is no [illegible] human life was not something [illegible] Lemon noble, "the [illegible] that is good only inside a system of law." And because moral values are not objective, the law [illegible] Thus Holmes [illegible] "The life of the law has not been logic: it has been experience. The [illegible] of a nation's customs and convictions [illegible] as well.

[illegible] "A disenchanted, what mattered most was [illegible] by partisan passion. He called it "job- works at his job without trying to im- impression. . . . The jobbist is alone with [illegible] Holmes, Wilson wanted to drive home

the disgust for the pretense of moral certainty, a disenchantment that gave rise to the most influential expression of pragmatism in American history.

That figure was Oliver Wendell Holmes, who was led by his horrific experience of the war to an astringently materialist skepticism, and Wilson very pointedly ends his book with a chapter on the legendary jurist and Supreme Court justice. [illegible] the Northern army at the beginning of

calls "truth" and "reason" to jus-

calls "virtue" and "civilization." Hence

I ers like a mysterious spirit over Menand's book, which ends with the be driven to violence by their beliefs." Yet for some reason Wilson's name text, nor in his end notes, nor in his

Whereas Wilson began with the Cold War and ended with the Civil War, Menand begins with the Civil War and ends with the Cold War. Wilson ends with a chapter on Holmes; writes: "The lesson Holmes took from that certitude leads to violence." Like l War and the Cold War are kindred episodes in American history, that principle over the values of pluralism, experimentation, and functionalism.

under the banner of moral certitude His was the banner of abolitionism, and millions of men were killed or result, in part, of abolitionist fervor. Thus the displacement, following the war, of eternal verities with pragmatism's local, functional truths. He writes: "For the generation that lived through it, the Civil War was a terri-

> discredited the beliefs and assumptions of the era that preceded it. . . . The Civil War swept away the slave civilization of the South, but it swept away almost the whole intellectual culture of the [illegible] a century for the United States to develop a culture to replace it, to find a set of ideas, and a way of thinking, that would help people cope with the con- [illegible] modern life.

These were the new ideas of pragmatism, and they endured, in Menand's view, until the period of the Cold War. He ends *The Metaphysical Club* with a regrettul rumination on why they [illegible]

> The reason has to do with the difference between the intellectual climate after the Civil War and the intellectual climate of the Cold War. . . . The Cold War was a war over principles. . . . A style of thought that elevated compromise over confrontation therefore did [illegible] appeal. Even the opponents of the Cold War meant their opposition on principle.

Once again, principles grow out of certitude, and certitude leads to violence. Similarly, Wilson wrote about "the insufferable moral attitudes that appeared to us first to be justified by our victory over the Confederacy in 1865. This prevents us from recognizing today, in our relation to our cold-war opponent, that our panicky pugnacity as we challenge him is not virtue but at bottom the irrational instinct of an active power organism. . . ."

Make no mistake about it, Menand is not leaning on Wilson. *Patriotic Gore* and *The Metaphysical Club* are very different books. For one thing, Menand's Holmes is a much less complex and contradictory character than Wilson's version; for another, Menand has a much more complex and mature set of judgments than Wilson seemed willing to allow himself in his 1962 preface.

Menand concedes, for example, that without Martin Luther King Jr.'s moral certitude, enacted during the Cold War, there would have been no civil rights movement: "it is a question whether the movement he led could have accomplished what it did if its inspirations had come from Dew Holmes rather than Reinhold N and Mahatma Gandhi." Menar tainly does not share Wilson's nihilistic relativism, though hi is so suffused with a spirit of un ing pluralism that he never goe tell us, for example, what he m pragmatism in the light of morally absolutist influences

One is left with the fac Menand decided not to ackno a classic work of American lit that, forty years before, prefigu thesis of *The Metaphysical Cl* pinned it on the same historic dence. This is not irresponsibi Menand's part; you could not book more conscientiously rese and annotated than this one. M omission of Wilson, and often dence that would contradict, qualify, his thesis, seems to me growth of his pragmatist positi Menand approvingly summar the pragmatists

> believed that ideas are not "ou waiting to be discovered, but are like forks and knives and micro that people devise to cope with t in which they find themselves. T believed that ideas are produced n dividuals, but by groups of indiv that ideas are social. They belie ideas do not develop according inner logic of their own, but ar ly dependent, like germs, on thei carriers and the environment. A believed that since ideas are pr al responses to particular and ducible circumstances, their sur pends not on their immutabilit their adaptability.

That is to say, ideas are to be ju the use they serve, not by thei ent intellectual or moral wort that are not useful, that do the occasion, are not valid. A ideas are socially generated, n mind can lay claim to an idea

By these pragmatic criteria, sis of *The Metaphysical Club*—i the moral absolutes responsibl Civil War created, after the pragmatist conviction that c leads to violence—is the on idea on which to build the b cause it is the only idea the quires. Contradicting or qualif idence that does not serve th purpose can therefore be om

thesis, such as Wilson's, can be because it grew in a different en- ment and lacks a useful relevance. uld say that Menand's idea, to a new set of circumstances, ead Wilson's. And it is indeed have said, that Wilson's book ally different animal from 's; except, that is, for that idea ertitude, and violence, and the ar. I cannot emphasize enough ch I value Menand as a scrupu- and an honest writer. I simply at his study of pragmatism may e been weakened by his prac- .

Menand tells the story of pragmatism through the lives of its four early exem- Holmes, William James, Peirce, and John Dewey. He to show how each man came came conclusion about the la- miting effects of intellectual y, a conclusion that in turn the premise of America's only own philosophy.

and's conceptual mainspring is a certain moment in time — 1872, to be precise — Holmes, and Peirce formed a casual dis- group that they called The ysical Club. The convergence e symbolic than anything else, these men had known one an- r years and had been exchang- as for years. (In Menand's in- ory essay to *Pragmatism: A* he tells us that the nineteenth was in fact full of discussion called "metaphysical clubs.") rightly declines to make much incidence, but the existence of provides him with a clear ex- f the social shaping of an idea tolerant intellectual exchange, s the essence of the pragmatic of truth.

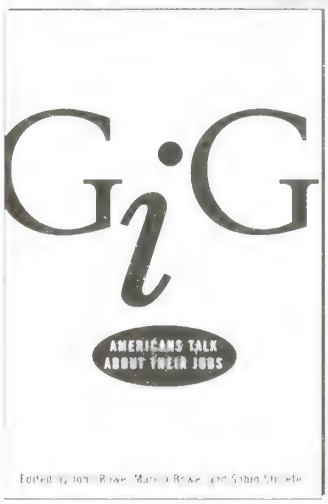
one of the more severe limita- *The Metaphysical Club* is that it aves pragmatism's academic ors—Harvard, for the most explore what social forces had pragmatic spirit *avant la lettre* the time Confederate guns fired Sumter in 1861, the American had been totally transformed es of immigration, by unbe- fast urban growth, by rapid industrialization, and by Jacksonian empowerment of the multiethnic masses.

The South, on the other hand, had stayed the same, held together—to put it somewhat simplistically—by an old belief in objective truth, in timeless good and evil, in an ordered cosmos ruled by God and knowable to the mind. That framework had been "swept away," to use Menand's phrase, from the hectic Northern consciousness long before the Civil War. Pragmatism's secularist and skeptical and relativist mentality was as much the soil from which the Civil War sprang as a consequence of the Civil War's shocking atrocities. One could even say that abolitionist utopianism arrived in the North as a gratifying alternative to the rising tide of secularism and materialism, and that this helps to explain why Northern writers and intellectuals took up the abolitionist cause with such intensity.

Menand ignores the big historical picture, however, and builds his theme of the Civil War's influence on biography instead. For this very reason, he fails to sustain his argument, which is in this instance contradicted by his own evidence. His case starts to crumble right after the chapter on Holmes, for the simple reason that no other of his protagonists was affected by the war in a substantial way. Holmes was the only one to fight in it. To be sure, the war profoundly changed the way every thoughtful person in America conceived of the world. But for those who did not experience the war first-hand, its effects took their place among all the other of life's influences.

James's pragmatism, with its faith in willing one's state of mind and making such self-generated conviction, in turn, a truth to live by, seemed to grow most directly out of his long depressions. (Menand once wrote a brilliant essay on the circumstances and ramifications of James's depression for *The New York Review of Books*; one wishes that he had repeated at least some of it here, despite its inconvenience to his overriding theme.) As for Peirce, he was a violently irascible character, who was even further removed from the war than James, protected from its brutality by his vanity and selfishness. And Dewey was only two years old when the war started; he was all of thirteen

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Varieties of Religious Experience, the work of a [illegible] about religion whose [illegible] the brighter side of a tortured dual nature. In the final pages of that remarkable book, James even [illegible] immortality, or God. James was never [illegible] life, he tried.

I say bewilderingly because a belief [illegible] pragmatist position. And Menand never returns to James's hunger for spiritual [illegible] the fact that the struggle with religious belief took up a great part of [illegible] Menand has already spent countless pages up to this point trying to connect James to enlightened social pol[illegible]

It is not even accurate for Menand [illegible] James hostile to the moral certitudes of war or to the certainties of the abolitionists. In his famous essay of 1910, [illegible] ickson quotes him in his classic work, *The Inner Civil War*. James even waxed nostalgic, in that essay, for the Civil [illegible]

[illegible] "imprisoned, shipwrecked or forced into the army'" to "'find the good life.'" James, writes Frederickson, "spoke of the idea of 'the Union' in the Civil War as one of the great 'energy-releasing ideas.'" "'Our war for the Union,'" in James's words, was "'the most ideal part of what we now own together . . . a sacred possession worth more than all the blood poured out.'"

In the end, the evidence suggests that for each of the four men pragmatism was an eccentric program that shored up the weaker elements of character. But as a general philosophy, pragmatism does not seem to offer a guide to life's perplexity. Menand rather chillingly describes pragmatism's ethics:

> Making the sorts of decisions about what is right or what is truthful [illegible] decide what to order in a restaurant, in the sense that getting a handle on [illegible] is no harder or easier (even though it is generally less important) than getting a handle on justice or truth.

Such a dispiriting notion of moral choice brings you right back to where you started. It restates life's perplexity. So much, too, for the pragmatist's emphasis on making a distinction between social contexts.

Pragmatism has not always been an idiosyncratic response to life or a timid set of utilitarian redundancies. Its sagging metaphysical sails once bulged with the brisk winds of radical politics. Menand has, consistent with his approach, a narrow take on pragmatism's relationship to American politics. Describing the [illegible] decade roiled by labor conflicts and [illegible]torism, he writes: "In a time when the chance of another civil war did not seem remote, a philosophy that warned against the idolatry of ideas was possibly the only philosophy on which a progressive politics could [illegible] successfully mounted."

This is an astounding proposition, since the history of labor in America is the story not of pragmatic nuances [illegible] challenges to unrestrained capital and its political co[illegible] These challenges were driven precisely by ideas; and these ideas were drawn from the ideology of Marxism. In fact it was Dewey's pragmatism that [illegible] girders of Marxist thinking—[illegible] former student at Columbia, [illegible] Hook, who also used pragmat[illegible] aerate Marxist doctrine in such [illegible] as *The Metaphysics of Pragmatis*[illegible]

The contemporary Am[illegible] philosopher Richard Rorty (wl[illegible] Hook, should have gotten at [illegible] mention in a major book abou[illegible] matism's value and influence) [illegible] figure most responsible for p[illegible] tism's revival in America [illegible] Whereas Hook tried to blen[illegible] matism with Marxism, Rorty ha[illegible] en to fuse pragmatism with po[illegible] turalism. To put it crudely, he s[illegible] have reached a dead end, end[illegible] with a vision of life in which m[illegible] is reduced to language, languag[illegible] duced to its various specific co[illegible] and these contexts are reduced[illegible] currents of decentered pow[illegible] course through them. The res[illegible] world of competing "narratives [illegible] one as valid as the other, a wor[illegible] one can change simply by "re[illegible] ing" it in different words with d[illegible] values.

For people in difficulties, [illegible] ideas are powerfully relevant. F[illegible] besieged or bullied or estrange[illegible] tive outsider, the idea that the [illegible] and conventions imprisoning [illegible] arbitrary, that they are as we [illegible] fragile as they make you feel, is [illegible] tiful conviction. Rorty has [illegible] lamented the loss of romantic [illegible] American philosophy, and I th[illegible] has come round to what has [illegible] been his Emersonian essence, w[illegible] in Emerson's words, "to believ[illegible] what is true for you in your [illegible] heart is true for all men." Thi[illegible] personal pragmatism that ca[illegible] American individuals again[illegible] coarse insentient pragmatics-[illegible] ting a handle on tastiness"—of [illegible] ican life.

Politically, Rorty's meta-th[illegible] ries do not hold much appe[illegible] seems to me something of a [illegible] chair anarchist, well aware [illegible] general ineffectuality of his i[illegible] is everyday power structure[illegible] conceal themselves behind s[illegible] interchangeable narratives; a [illegible] est and brave response to th[illegible] quires a stable story and the c[illegible] to stick to it. Not surpris[illegible] Rorty's complicated relativi[illegible]

merely to shelter some older
from the PC crudities of
life and, ironically, also tur-
the political centrism that h
ly-mothered the fading coals of
can political adversarialism.
was storming the steps of the
e Court last November fired
Rorty's famous "linguistic
Why should they have? *Bush*
was just another narrative
then much has changed since
and Hook. Menand seems in-
t to this. Explaining why prag-
seemed "to some people the
philosophical utensil [eating
for a few decades after 1898,"
tes that "the year James intro-
pragmatism was also the year
erican economy began to move
om an individualist ideal of un-
ed competition and toward a
cratic [i.e., pragmatic] ideal of
ement and regulation."

se conditions, however, are ex-
he reverse of our current situa-
n which the individualist ideal
estrained competition has al-
entirely vanquished the values
lation and restraint. One would
hat we need a little adversarial
ide, now more than ever. But
nd will not let go of his aversion
evils of moral certitude. The
hat there is good moral certitude
d moral certitude—just as there
od pragmatism and a bad prag-
in—does not appear to persuade
le attributes to a pragmatist in-
e Holmes's judicial defenses of
eech and workers' rights, as well
ghtened American attitudes to-
ace and immigrants. He comes
ntify the spirit of pragmatism
emocracy itself. But he does not
e with the significance of the
hat the very basis of American
racy lies in the words "we hold
truths to be self-evident."

I can be certain of something
t wish to impose it on everyone
There are certainties that you
arbor about life that you do not
persuade anyone else of, sim-
cause you take it for granted that
ne else lives by them already—
t each person lives by them in his
n way. Maybe that is the im-
behind making art: to diffuse
certainty about a universal

PEOPLE I MET HITCHHIKING ON USA HIGHWAYS

by ERIC CHAET

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-Reviewer: Ken Miller, *Philadelphia*

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A	B	O	H	U	C	I	T	A	R	S	L	A	S
G	A	Z	E	B	O	R	O	S	E	H	I	P	S
E	T	E	R	T	O	G	P	E	D	[illegible]	F	L	E
D	E	M	E	S	N	E	A	D	O	P	T	E	E

NOTES FOR "MISSING LINKS"

The links are names of famous golfers: PALMER, HOGAN, PLAYER, VENTURI, WOOD, BOROS, SNEAD

Proper names, Down Answers

Anagrams are indicated with an asterisk (*)

ACROSS: 1. adept(ex); 5. [illegible]; 9. [illegible]; 10. [illegible]; 11. [illegible]; 12. [illegible]; 13. [illegible]; 14. [illegible]; 15. [illegible]; 16. [illegible]; 17. [illegible]; 18. [illegible]; 19. [illegible]; 20. [illegible]; 21. [illegible]; 22. [illegible]; 23. [illegible]; 24. [illegible]; 25. [illegible]; 26. [illegible]; 27. [illegible]; 28. [illegible].

DOWN: 1. [illegible]; 2. [illegible]; 3. [illegible]; 4. [illegible]; 5. [illegible]; 6. [illegible]; 7. [illegible]; 8. [illegible]; 9. [illegible]; 10. [illegible]; 11. [illegible]; 12. [illegible]; 13. [illegible]; 14. [illegible]; 15. [illegible]; 16. [illegible]; 17. [illegible]; 18. [illegible]; 19. [illegible]; 20. *; 21. deb-ate; 22. Coco-on; 23. homonym; 24. *; 25. doze(n); 26. homonym; 27. dir(g)e; 28. *.

judge, and you believe, as Holmes did,

[illegible]

[illegible] it, in other words, you are not obligated to operate within a system

[illegible]

simply exercising your will when and where and how you want? And if the law should change as society changes, what happens when society changes for the worst, as it did in Germany in

[illegible]

Holmes is no comfort here: "If the will of the majority is unmistakable,

[illegible]

have a clear power to enforce its will, and intends to do so, the courts must yield." The jobbist's ideal of doing your duty and "touching the superlative" is a stirring one. But what if your duty is to kill innocent people, and your superlative lies in killing them as efficiently and clandestinely as possible? When does, in Menand's admiring words, Holmes's "belief that nobility of character consists in doing

[illegible]

become the by-now proverbial brutality of simply "following orders"?

Similarly, it is not clear what seeing truth in social terms really means. If I work for a company that is doing something to endanger the surrounding neighborhood but makes a product that helps people elsewhere, which social group do I respond to? I have to trust, as Emerson's words, my "private heart," my innate "genius."

[illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [

N DRUGS

ways to gnosis, or bags of glue?

Daniel Kunitz

s I in this essay

n Drugs, by Sadie Plant. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000. 272 pages. $24.
A Cultural History of Intoxication, by Stuart Walton. Hamish Hamil-
2001. 360 pages. £12.99



rugs are a banality. Ubiquitous as toothpaste and commonplace as prose, they are never-inged by nostalgia with an air ity, as if caffeine and cigarettes, and cocktails and diet pills, olor our days and bring black-our nights. Each morning brings of some actor or sports star bust-licit substances, of Olympians n steroids, of Ritalin snorters urban pill poppers; and we us, thrilled by the louche spec-uck with righteousness and pity,

unitz is the literary editor of Details *and the co-editor of* Gallery *reviewer for* w Criterion.

all the while surrendering our most basic freedoms—the right to decide for ourselves what goes into our bodies and goes on in our minds.

Freedom of that sort is a romantic ideal; we are modern and therefore medicalized. After being subjected to more than twenty-five years of a misguided and ineffective drug war, we seem largely incapable of imagining a world that doesn't vigorously police our consciousness, despite the fact that before World War I such a world existed for thousands of years. By contrast, the British seem to be far less constrained. They can approach drug taking as though it were still the sacrosanct purview of poets and intrepid bohemian plumbers of consciousness, as though it were still a matter of saucer-eyed exploration; or they can espouse an insouciant hedonism. In fact, it is difficult to imagine an American writing either of the two books—both by English writers—under consideration here, each suffused with a tacit advocacy of recreational or experimental drug use. Our relentless *puritanism*—so trite that the eye glides over the word itself with the merest shrug of self-recognition—which today finds expression in a medical establishment that turns every casual intoxication into "abuse," in draconian prohibitions and [illegible] tory sentences and [illegible] "zero tolerance" [illegible] ganda campaigns [illegible] gogic cults of the [illegible] requires that all discussion of [illegible] take place in an admonitory tone or, at the very least, that we shield every book and film in which [illegible] occurs with some preliminary [illegible] arching statement that this [illegible] ing about the perils of drug abuse.

Evidently the English, who long ago sent their most strident puritans to our shores, need no such tone: neither Stuart Walton, a wine writer, nor Sadie Plant, a lecturer and journalist, feels required to make a show of being "against drugs." Their books do more than provide an antidote to the befuddling propaganda of American drug-war ideology; they stand as guides marking the boundaries of antidrug rhetoric, embarkation points from which we can venture into thinking more flexibly about drugs and how they have shaped our literature and our culture. Walton's *Out of It: A Cultural History of Intoxication* offers a straightforward history of the use of intoxicants by humans, including a fair-minded and soberly argued discussion of English and American antidrug laws, written by a rational hedonist, the sort of hard-working guy who likes a bump of coke with his Chardonnay. An intellectual son of Epicurus, the Greek philosopher who sought balance in all things, Walton represents the most recent cultural incarnation of the user: someone who gets high because it offers a pleasurable break from routine. He is Lester Burnham in *American Beauty*, blowing a joint in the garage before his workout. "Drugs appeal to us," Walton says, "because they deliver a variety of moods and states not immediately available from our surrounding realities: these may take in complete relaxation, ecstatic happiness, the negation of suffering, radically transformed perception, [illegible] sense of being alert and full of potential energy. What unites these disparate effects is what is most important of all, however namely, that they make us feel *different*."

For Sadie Plant, just feeling different will not suffice. In *Writing on Drugs*, she channels the moldering spirit of Romanticism, of mystics and visionary

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eaten fermented grapes. A pottery

ing the leaves of a coca bush. And legend

pressed by the antics of his flock after

monastery, where the monks brewed

gathered learning of the stimulant

"Wherever there is an intoxicant to

Reading these books, I couldn't es-

Plant spend much of their boc
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has never been determined
though ergot, a fungus that gr
grains and is related to LSD, is
ing candidate) animated the E
tan mysteries. Archaeological e

the Neolithic Age; the earliest
of cannabis use date from th
millennium B.C. But American
be more impressed to kno
George Washington grew pot
own medicinal use and that
Victoria (a major head, if Walt
be believed) took it for men
cramps. (Victoria, it turns out,
William McKinley and Pop
XIII, who dug it so much he a
a papal medal to Angelo Mari
ventor of a wine-and-coca toni
sacramental importance to nati
ples of such substances as magic
rooms, coca, tobacco, peyote, a
has long been documented. In
that medieval European women
plants such as hemlock, monk
deadly nightshade, and henbar
of which contain psychoactiv
smeared on parts of their bodies
the witch's broomstick beco
means of ingesting an hallucin
drug, "the vaginal membranes
meable regions of the body."

One must, however, keep ir
the fact that for almost all of th
cient peoples intoxicants exist
Because of this, drugs as we kno
came late to the history of hum
ture: indeed, the great Western
sion with drugs, an obsession th
on today in cover articles
and *The New York Times* Maga
such films as *Blow* and *Traffic*,
innumerable books, began only
200 years ago. In fact, it wasn
the nineteenth century, whe
leridge and Thomas de Quinc
gan writing about the addictiv
rties of opium, that the discrete
of a "drug" as a high-giving and

n substance first took shape. The
y chroniclers of inebriation literally
d drugs into existence. By intro-
g the reading public to what we
nk of as recreational drugs, the
h romantics established a new
the psychotropic theater, what
n hedonistic mode of drug tak-
e user, generally a writer or artist,
ered consciousness or seeker
ions. That this occurred during
neteenth century, the great era
hemistry, would seem no accident:
Humphry Davy gave the first paper
nous oxide in 1800; in 1806 mor-
n became the first alkaloid to be
d from its organic base; German
ists isolated cocaine in the mid-
the century. Alexander Wood
ted the hypodermic syringe in
– and diacetylmorphine, or hero-
was discovered in 1898. During
entury, the romantic, experi-
al cast of mind propelled the ex-
ions of scientists and poets alike.
ter boy for the druggie artist
the French poet Arthur Rim-
bet out through a "systematic dis-
g of all the senses" to transform
lf into a visionary, a "supreme
ist."

Since their "discovery," drugs have taken on a double life in the collective mind: as the subject of spiration for various writings ding, in our century, films), and ted by that literature) as a touch-n for expression in our daily lives. ough literature, drugs became a ast for the formation of subcul-the mid-nineteenth century Elles Hachichins (which included riters Charles Baudelaire, Hon-é Balzac, Théophile Gautier, and rd de Nerval, and the painter Eu-Delacroix), hash and opium e in the 1890s, beatniks, hippies, heads, speed freaks, Yuppie coke rs, tranced-out ravers on ecsta-nd those subcultures have in their become subjects for other writ-nd on and on in an endless loop estion and creation. Of course, the advent of drugs came new and alien notions. Coleridge the word "intensity" to describe fects of opium, and, as Walton s out, "Until the later years of neteenth century, the concept of drug abuse barely existed." The drug novel, second only to the detective of the twentieth century, would all but unthinkable until the latter part of the classifying-crazed nineteenth century, when society began making moral judgments about chemical intoxication. (Muslim societies are an exception, Islam being the only major religion that had always prohibited alcohol.) Still, the original literature, the fount from which all the novel and poems spring, is the memoir, usually in the form of, as De Quincey put it, "the record of a remarkable period in my life . . . not merely an interesting record, but, in a considerable degree, useful and instructive." This was true and it is in *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* and Coleridge's in parts of the *Biographia Literaria*. In the twentieth century, Aldous Huxley employed instructive recollection in *The Doors of Perception*, as did Jean Cocteau in *Opium* (his diary of an opium eater), William Burroughs in his essentially memoiristic *Junky*, and Allen Ginsberg in his poem *Howl*. Over the last several decades, increased attention to the widespread social phenomenon of substance abuse has resulted in an unstanched flow of addict-as-victim recovery movement monologues and emotional fan dances, a stream of gruesome exhibitionism with all the aesthetic appeal of an amateur striptease night at a nursing home. Even so, and despite the burgeoning horde of books made expressly for daytime talk shows, every generation finds its own true De Quincey, the finest recent example being Ann Marlowe's memoir *How to Stop Time: Heroin from A to Z*, a breezily ironic recollection of New York's early nineties dope scene. (By the way, the first drug memoir written by a woman was Annie C. Meyers's *Eight Years in Cocaine Hell*, 1902.)

The thing about the memoir is its specificity; it tends to be restricted to one person's affair with his or her drug of choice. For those writers with encyclopedic tastes, the bibliographic grail is a comprehensive tome that would reveal the secrets of all drugs and stand as the last word on the subject. The German critic Walter Benjamin spoke of such a project, as did the later French theorist Michel Foucault, who, just two years before his



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…ic states, to oriental tyranny. . . ." And, …Alexander Trocchi made plans for a book called *Drugs of the Mind*, though, sadly, like most stoner plans it remained illusory. De Quincey himself promised readers another installment …

Clearly, the specter of a great work encompassing all drug knowledge haunts both Plant and Walton. It is Plant who recognizes the allure of such a book for other writers, and her extensive treatment of the subject must be seen as an attempt to fulfill the unpaid debts left by all those "abandoned projects and incomplete reports." For his part, Walton never addresses outright the idea of such a book, though he implies that his own takes aim at the goal when he chooses as his epigraph the guiding words of Friedrich Nietzsche: "Who will ever relate the whole history of narcotica? It is almost the history of 'culture,' of our so-called high culture." Needless to say, the oasis of perfect exhaustiveness toward which Plant and Walton travel proves in the end to be a mirage, and the path to it overly elusive, too faintly imprinted on the philosophical wilderness.

A somewhat Janus-faced effort, …"the way intoxication has formed an …art of human cultural development …times." It presents a lucid and informative study of the enduring symbiosis that has always existed between human …substances, in the process making a particularly convincing argument that intoxication is an essential part of our makeup, inseparable from who and what we are. Walton elaborates his chronology in a dry, journalistic tone, which rises to a pitch of impassioned indignation only when relating the comparatively recent and misguided forays of government into prohibiting drug use. Intoxication, he believes, is a fundamental human right.

Plant's history proceeds in a more desultory fashion, focusing on the writers who have been drawn to drugs, at times taking short excursions into the physiology of drug use and the politics of the trade in illicit substances. Relying on biography, historical fact, and legend, interwoven with quoted samplings of favored authors, Plant, the attentive tour guide, points to a variety of thematic vistas spreading from the artificial paradise of intoxication. Some of them, such as the Orpheus myth …or the heaven-and-hell metaphors associated with opiates, will be familiar landscapes to those wayward folks who, provoked by their own experiences, have already delved into the literature. Others, such as the suggestion that cocaine elicits themes of duality and deception ("The drug of the confidence trick is cocaine," she writes), and that it was crucial to the development of both the detective novel and psychoanalysis, and that experimentation with psychedelics fueled and was fueled by early work on the computer, constitute genuine insights, whereas assertions such as "MDMA's dream trippers had a preview of virtual life in cyberspace" will, I imagine, arch the eyebrows of even the most jaded connoisseur of intoxicants.

One can't help feeling that *Writing on Drugs* would have been more shapely had it kept a destination in view, one delineated by an argument. Instead Plant tends to swoop down, hawklike, on a given point or theme, toying with it for a few pages before riding a thermal up into another loop of speculation. In places the book reads like the late-night musings of a professor on a cocaine jag—intelligible, wholly informed, though propelled by an aimless curiosity, which, in daylight, doesn't entirely hold together. Plant, I suspect, felt that any definite conclusion might undermine or unduly straighten the inherently circular paths along which she believes drugs lead us. Hers is a spiraling road, and addictio… metaphor for continuous repe… "All writing is addiction, and a… ers are hooked," she asserts—… tendentiously, it seems to me. F… diction is not the only repetiti… lies in wait for the writer on… There are other patterns and … ring themes, calls that echo t… the work of them all." When it … to drugs, writers apparently don… much from one another. No c… ary tale can keep the rummagi… from the garbage pile: "each … reading the others' work, rep… their adventures, and also the … takes, endlessly rehearsing th… refrain." Like much drug logic … both true and not true. Cer… themes recur, yet the example … book belie Plant's logic of circ… new patterns do emerge, and, … minds of the best writers, old … serve as prisms opening whole … of fresh concepts.

The first-grade literary … poets of the early nine… century tended to loc… ward, equating alien states o… sciousness with exotic realm… leridge's Xanadu with its … pleasure dome" and sacred riv… ning "through caverns measure… man/Down to a sunless sea… Asian pagodas and idols that … late De Quincey's dreams; B… laire's artificial paradises, his … thesias and "infinite perspec… …sometime later in the centur… haps beginning with Rimbau… sionary project or with Poe's r… native detective Dupin, they … turning their attentions inw… the workings and unworkings … mind. As moralizers ranted a… drunkenness, as people digest… Quincey, formulating the first … ries of addiction, and as consp… groups of bohemian artists wer… smoking opium and eating h… the drug experience instigated … terest in social outcasts—and … all this a taste for the logic of … tion and analysis emerged.

Hard-core opium addict W… Collins, who, it was said, drank … laudanum in a single dose to … dozen men, wrote *The Moonsto*… of the first detective novels, if n…

,nder the drug's influence. (He
r id he could barely recall writing
l act, opium figures as a principal
r -induced theft). And Sherlock
ies, Arthur Conan Doyle's co-
d rebels at stagnation." For
rs, drugs serve alternately as an
t or a stand-in for detective work.
vme problems, give me work, give
ntricate analysis, and I am in
per atmosphere. I can dispense
ith artificial stimulants." A fan
Hock Holmes, Sigmund Freud al-
nd cocaine to be a gateway drug
rlysts. In the 1880s he advocated
ne with all the gusto of an ado-
et, writing "Uber Coca," a "song
rse to this magical substance," as
ls letters in which he titillated
fe with promises of returning
n "a wild man with cocaine in his
en 1891 did Freud decide that
it suffering ... although the most
et, was for that reason danger-
noxious." Historian and Freud
gpher Peter Gay notes that Freud
t his last letter mentioning co-
luse in 1895. After kicking the
ne began to consider the analyt-
thod a better defense against suf-
r: he published *The Interpretation*

)uring the later part of the nine-
n century, when the first co-
experiments were in vogue, au-
negan describing a split in their
e selves, fixing on doubles and
nlgängers. Holmes, for example,
a "evil twin" and "perfect coun-
f sor Moriarty. The most notori-
literary doubles, of course, are
ied in Robert Louis Stevenson's
Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and
e story of a man who takes a drug
ge life to what has previously
one side of his character, a per-
ity secreted within his own."
ding to Plant, Stevenson com-
e the work "during six days and
nights of a cocaine high" —a tempting supposition for which Plant offers no evidence. Nor, for that matter, does she adduce evidence that
time of Baudelaire, ever took opium, or anything more exotic than alco-
always influenced drug culture at least as powerfully as the substances themselves, though neither Plant

In the twentieth century inward-looking writers tripping on powerful hallucinogens such as mescaline and LSD delved into the pre-Freudian, pre-analytic, primitive psyche. Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* helped make mystical visionary states a dominant
berg's poems and Carlos Castaneda's
same time, such writers as Jean Cocteau, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, and Norman Mailer linked drugs to social rebellion and counter-cultural fantasies. Obviously, these two impulses—the mystical, visionary one and the rebellious one—fused to a large
enough, the sixties did not produce a superior body of drug literature.

As the recreational use of drugs became more widespread in the sixties and seventies, it became common for films to depict people indulging in illicit substances, and reams upon reams were written about drugs in magazines, popular novels, self-help books, etc. the cultural suburbs, the notion of drugs as vehicles for inner exploration, as a means of literary inspiration, or as guides to enlightenment, diminished significantly. "Art," wrote Huxley, presaging the decline of literary drug exploration, "... is only for beginners, or else for those resolute dead-enders, who have made up their minds to be content with the ersatz of Suchness,

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with symbols rather than with what

employed drug

lit cat

king opium for in-

stance use stand not for enlight-

bathroom. Romantics like Plant or Ann Marlowe still exist, and they still them more than a whiff of nostalgia.

Through almost all writing about drugs, a fixation on time reappears like a leitmotif. Coca, writes Plant, "was used as a measure of both exchange and time: the Incas silver or gold, and Indians from the Peruvian sierra measured journeys in *cocadas*—the time between doses of coca." Cocaine speeds time along: Louis Blériot, the first man to fly across the English Channel, made his trip with a bottle of Mariani's tonic. Other drugs, depressants, have the effect of slowing time, concentrating the temporal in impossibly attenuated moles her book on heroin. Octavio Paz made the connection between drugs *ing Current*. "The ultimate meaning clearer now: it is a criticism of linear time and a nostalgia for (or a presen-

To the question of why writers, who rely on the perspicacity of their minds for their livelihood, have been consistently attracted to chemicals that blunt their mental faculties, Paz's insight offers one compelling answer. Early in their lives, people who become writers tend to experience intensely the joy of forgetting oneself utterly in reading, of losing hours and days to that particular form of concentration. Drugs allow them to recapture that pleasurable to for "another sort of time," specifically a child's version: contracted, frozen, escapist. I know of only two non-drug-induced analogues to the concentrated time experienced in childhood. One is that rare hour when I am able to block out all adult anxieties and, in the effortless way reserved for children, submit entirely to the book I'm reading. The other is in the act of writing itself.

Drugs do frequently induce fits of yearning—for an idealized Orient of opium dens, for the heady sixties, for smoke-filled jazz clubs, for a simpler time when it seemed risky and exciting to smoke hash or try ecstasy. The reasons are twofold. First, drugs are so interwoven into our cultural history that doing them, as with any rite or ritual, inevitably recalls other, older drug rituals: eating magic mushrooms with friends invokes, say, the shamanic ceremonies of the Pacific Northwest. Second, drugs produce similar and predictable results (this is a prime component of addiction), thus creating a kind of manifest continuity alien to our normal lives. Because drugs interrupt the unnoticed sequence of our daily existence, taking them has, often, the quality of an event. They are at once a part of and apart from the regular grind. Getting high feels new and unexpected and, at the same time, old, like something one read when one was young.

"Ever since I read De Quincey in my early teens I'd planned to try opium," writes Ann Marlowe. One of the disappointing lacunae I noticed in both Walton and Plant is that they never talk about the drug books of my own youth, which were tempters before they were guides: Jim Carroll's *The Basketball Diaries;* Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas;* the sad pages of *Go Ask Alice,* the anonymous story of a teenage hippie girl's madness-inducing trip into substance abuse; Tom Wolfe's *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test;* Robert Stone's *Dog Soldiers;* even Bret Easton Ellis's *Less than Zero.* Taken together, these books do not constitute a zenith of literary achievement; they have varying aesthetic value. What is certain is that their authors did not represent drugs primarily as a means of exploring and expanding consciousness, of plumbing the soul, or of attaining mystical knowledge. Each of portorial. As a romantic chiefly interested in the exploratory side of the drug experience, Plant could hardly be expected to fasten on to such exam sheer escapism. And although e is in no way anathema to Walto sibility, his book doesn't exactly of "our so-called high culture," tory of which is the history of ica. Still, judging by his epigra is what Walton set out to wri mirable as these books are, the one important respect: they ne to tell us what connects Baude Freud with the greasy-haired fo year-old who drops a hit of w pane acid at the mall and then the rest of the night drinking b smoking pot with friends in parking lot. Apologies to Nie but *that* is the history of narc how clever goats stumbled up stances that for aeons were monplace as garbage; how the made us believe for a time th substances were special and cou us special; and why it is that th have left the herd and all w garbage.

October Index Sources

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LETTERS

[illegible] monthly journal *The Conservator*, [illegible] issue of which lacked [illegible] of some kind. In its last issue, just months before Traubel died in 1919, he published a brilliant "last hurrah" on the centennial of his idol's birth. Davenport perceptively calls "Song of Myself" a "script for readers to recite," and that is exactly Traubel's point in his moving valediction, which is included at the end of *Intimate with Walt*.

Gary Schmidgall
New York City

Penal Dysfunction

I commend your disturbing graphic on the emergence of supermaximum-facility incarceration ["Cruel and Unusual Punishment," Map, July]. As you ably document, these prisons pose a gross threat to the mental health of inmates and often violate the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution. In addition, it must be noted that many such prisons violate international law in the form of widely ratified human-rights treaties to which the United States is a party.

Taking that view, the Center for Constitutional Rights recently sued the Ohio State Penitentiary, alleging that, by mistreating inmates, the supermax violated these international treaties. Under federal law, government agents may be sued for depriving any individual of the rights guaranteed by the U.S. "Constitution and laws." In principle, treaties have been considered a part of international customary law and, by extension, part of U.S. law. In practice, however, infractions of international customary law are rarely introduced in domestic courts. If successful, the case will be a precedent forcing us as a nation to honor domestically the values that we promote in the world abroad.

[illegible]
Center for Constitutional Rights
New York City

SOLUTION TO "SONGS FROM [illegible] WOODS," READINGS, PAGE [illegible]

He [illegible] to another' can be taken as an o[illegible] *, that is, "x*y=z" denotes "x's [illegible] of * (everyone's song is sung to [illegible] by a singer), 2) we have an 'i[illegible] (the priest), 3) we have an 'inv[illegible] everyone (mates), 4) the (unav[illegible] [illegible] ty of the operation *.

Thus we have a group struct[illegible] 10,201 = 101 x 101 and 101 is [illegible] and any group of order of squ[illegible] prime is abelian.

Thus, if we Marian, wh[illegible] John's song to Robin. For the [illegible] question it suffices that we [illegible] structure since we have M[illegible] Robin Little John. We sho[illegible] Marian and Robin are mates a[illegible] can left multiply the equation [illegible] inverse to get Marian*Marian [illegible] John. And so Little John sing[illegible] her song.

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PUZZLE

Triskaidekacode

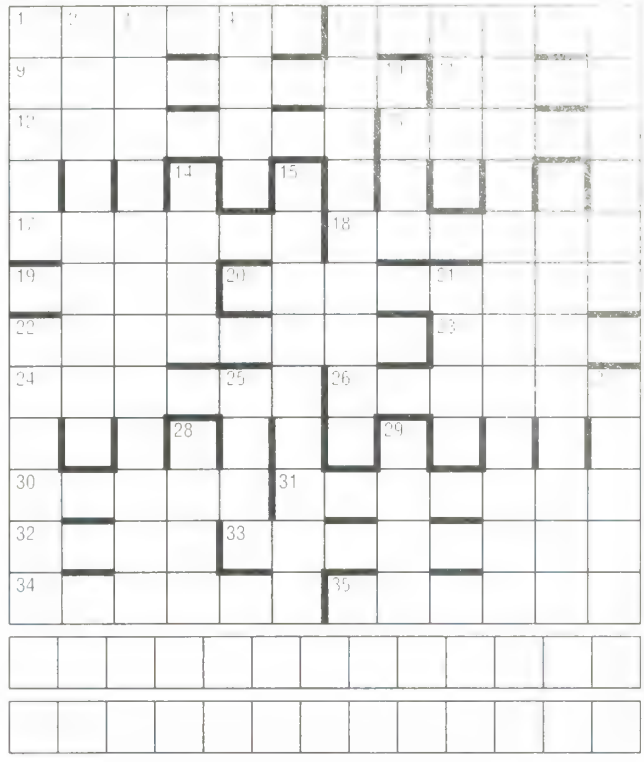
By Richard E. Maltby Jr.

A simple code has been created by taking a thirteen-letter keyword in which no letters repeat—and writing the remaining letters in alphabetical order under it. For instance:

L U M B E R J A C K I N G
D F H O P Q S T V W X Y Z

Encoding is done by vertical substitution; thus TONSIL encodes as ABYJXD. The answers to the four clues in italics are to be entered in the diagram in code, the base word of which must be discovered by logical deduction. Enter the base word and the code in the spaces below the diagram.

Clue answers include five proper names. As always, the literal repunctuation of a clue is the key to its solution. The solution to last month's puzzle appears on page 89.



ACROSS

1. *Who may upset Rick?* (6)
5. Desert not well lighted (6)
9. Hippy places large, short clamps at back of gym (8)
11. It's central to vineyard's quality times (4)
12. Place where I make another touchdown? (7)
13. Start to erase Cain outside gravesite (5)
17. Food processing systems could be nicer (6)
18. It's found around upper-class British house (6)
19. Bouquet to get much too high otherwise (4)
20. Mad at Clara, the last character to create a stir on mainland (8)
22. Virginia leading big game—just one down left (8)
23. To the ear, it's hemisemiotic! (4)
24. French girl in denim follows directions? Quite the reverse! (6)
26. No good dictator at heart, I'm giving people entitlement! (6)
30. Rifle shot pilot (5)
31. University student turned in article following tic-tac-toe row (7)
32. Ass might appear to be in rare form (4)
33. Taco: some made crackers out of it (8)
34. "A candle is this evil" (6)
35. *Summing in much backbreaking work* (6)

DOWN

1. Scots and it's the high point of Christmas (5)
2. Through this grove ran Daedalus, all decked out! (9)
3. To mum in a pickle: "Regenerated by the man who helps himself" (12)
4. Your is in order (4)
5. Decrees thrown out, prairie state gets come-down again (9)
6. Fleece raincoats turned up (4)
7. A triptych has this impressionistic portrait in it (12)
8. *Anti-Semitic [illegible]* (6)
10. Get out "Song Without Words" (4)
14. The lady love: the one who gets the glory (4)
15. A self-destructive gangster in fiction (9)
16. Convert in supporting underwear used to be the leader in [illegible] (9)
21. To me, it looks like a book! (4)
22. *What [illegible] point out at an auditorium* (6)
25. Fed, perhaps, from an overturned cola (4)
27. One [illegible] make it back from grand luxe [illegible] (5)
28. Stop [illegible] (4)
29. Billy club, perhaps (4)

Contest Rules: Send completed diagram with answers to clues to "Triskaidekacode," *Harper's Magazine*, 666 Broadway, New York, [illegible]. If you already subscribe to *Harper's*, please include [illegible] label. Entries must be received by the first day of the month preceding [illegible] issue. Winners, chosen at random from all correct solutions received, will be notified by mail. [illegible] will be printed in the December issue. Winners of the August puzzle, "Crime Scene," are Diane Dexter Billings, Kennebunk, Maine; Kennedy, Lexington, Massachusetts; and Harold Sanford, Seattle.

NASDAQ'S CONTINENTAL DRIFT

Until the Nasdaq bubble burst last spring, financial commentators pointed with awe to the fact that many techn[ology] [com]panies' market capitalization (stock price multiplied by [number] outstanding shares) had swollen to the size of respectabl[e] World national economies. Last year, for example, high-tech giants Lucent, Hewlett-Packard, and Intuit had r[each]ed capitalizations [com]parable to the GNPs of Switzerland, Finland, and Greece, respectively. By the time the Nasd[aq] plunged from its March 2000 peak of 5132 to a 1619 low last April, the value of these companies had been re[duced] to [com]parable to Egypt, Sweden, and Ukraine—all of which, along with the others shaded below, represent a before/after picture of companies that suffered precipitous losses during this period. Among the ten companies experiencing some of the worst declines (labeled), the average market-cap decline was 96 percent, reducing almost all of them to the level of some of the world's smallest or most precarious national economies. Meanwhile, the Nasdaq's combined market capitalization fell by at least $3 trillion, just shy of Japan's GNP, the world's second largest. Although a handful of other high-tech firms still retain their First W[orld] value, the majority, like those shown below, now find themselves as desperate for the attention of venture capitalists as the stru[ggling] [com]panies of the Third World.

—Ken Silv[erstein]

MARKET CAPS*

PEAK

Top Losers

CURRENT

Although Belarus boasts the second-largest economy among former satellite republics of the Soviet Union, these countries' average GNP is only one thirtieth of Europe's. In the Nasdaq world, Belarus seems the threshold of high-tech stardom. Sprint's value fell 81 percent before equaling Belarus's GNP, while the same amount represented Brocade Communication Systems' peak before the company sank to the equivalent of Ghana. Priceline also peaked at Belarus's level, only to tumble to Micronesia's last December before rallying to Tajikistan's in July

Nortel

BroadVision

Ariba

Lucent

Inktomi

InfoSpace

MicroStrategy

Corvis

Yahoo!

CMGI

KAZAKHSTAN

MONGOLIA

[redacted]

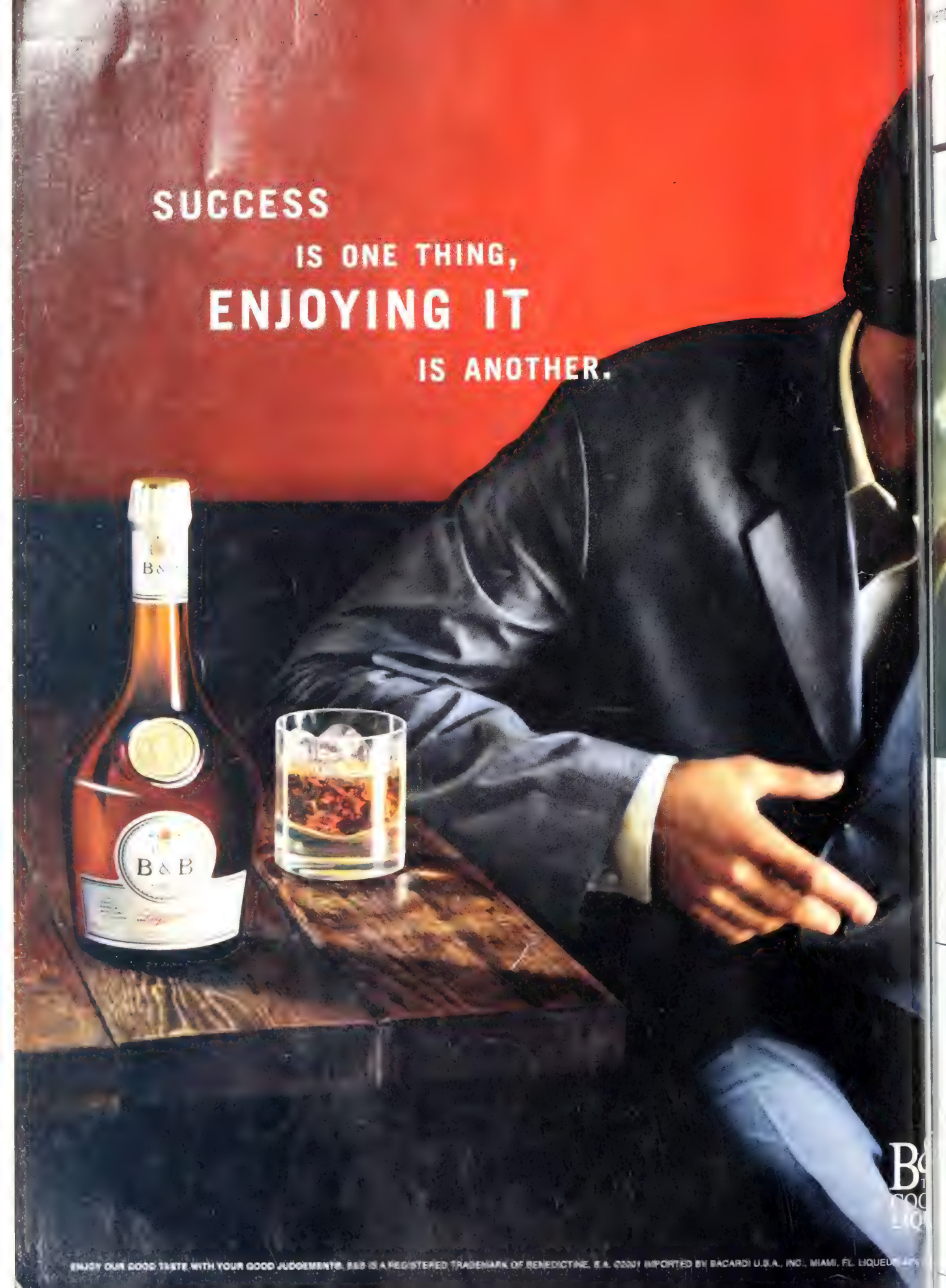
Juniper Networks' market cap fell to the level of Tanzania from that of Malaysia, a relatively successful economy among those of Asia and the Pacific, where the north-south [redacted] gap is less defined and th[e] average GNP is eighteen times that of African countries

Market-cap peaks for 1999–2000 derived from news accounts and share-price data

July 31, 2001. Labeled companies experienced the largest percentage market cap decline among those mapped. All market caps fall within 15 percent of their GNP-equivalent countries, except Slovenia (28 percent) and

Map by Russell O. Jones, based on *Harper's* res[earch]


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November

EBRATES JOHN MAYN

HARPER'S



DRUMS ALONG THE POTOMAC
New War, Old Music
By Lewis H. Lapham

◆

WELCOME TO CANCERLAND
A Mammogram Leads to a Cult of Pink Kitsch
By Barbara Ehrenreich

MY COMMUNIST
A story by Ron Hansen

Also: Francine Prose, Charles D'Ambrosio

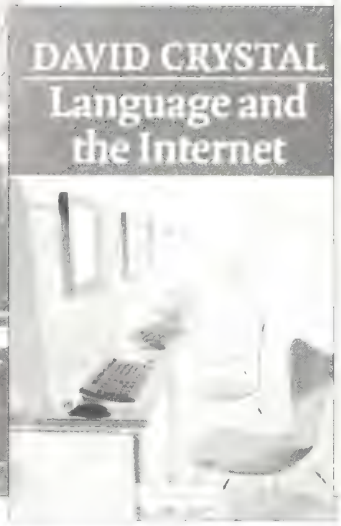
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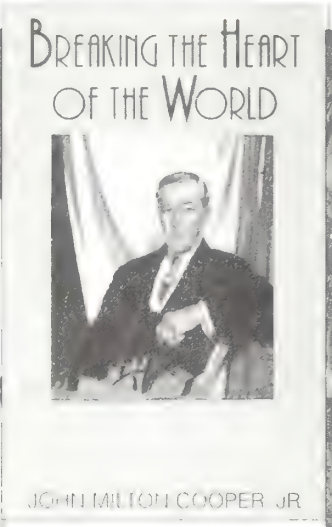

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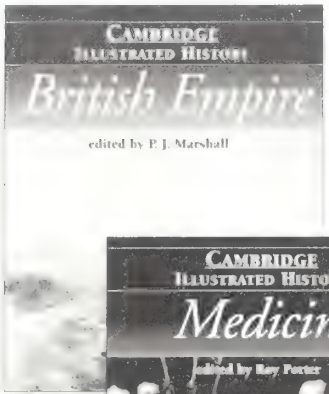
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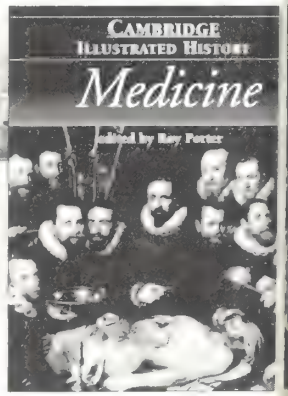
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HARPER'S

LETTERS

Imperial Masquerade

Lewis Lapham writes in his essay on the U.S. tendency toward imperialism ["The American Rome," August] that "the American people have never been infected with the virus of imperial ambition," observing that the "imperial pretensions briefly attendant upon the Spanish-American War consisted mostly of loud speeches."

The more than four million colonial subjects of the United States beg to differ. The imperial pretensions attendant upon that "splendid little war" (to quote one of those loud speechifiers) had concrete and lasting consequences. The United States took over Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines—"our islands and their peoples," in the words of a bestseller at the time. It took the Philippines a bloody rebellion and half a century to attain independence. Puerto Rico and Guam, meanwhile, remain U.S. colonies, along with the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and even smaller and less well-known island states. (Yes, the C.N.M.I. Did you know that if a product has a "Made in the U.S.A." tag it may have been made in the C.N.M.I., where th eral minimum wage does not ap

The inhabitants of these terri are U.S. citizens or U.S. nati They are fully subject to U.S. eignty but are denied federal sentation. They can be, and have drafted, however, to fight for d racy elsewhere.

Do voting Americans still l possess these islands and their pe Not likely. Did they once? Abs ly. But then the novelty wore o perial ambition gave way to Oly ignorance. Today these forg colonies clamor for a solution t dilemma, but nobody's reelecti pends on it.

Princeton, N.J.

We Americans obviously a "imperial people" and have throughout most of our histor Louisiana Purchase, the Indian the westward expansion, the can-American War, the Monro trine, our perennial designs on da, the Spanish-American W Alaska Purchase, a century of vention in Latin America, an than fifty years of political engin in the Middle East, to name a f amples, surely attest to that fac thermore, it's not as if we have a say in the matter; over our history, we have chosen, dem cally, to be an imperial people.

Please address mail to Letters, Harper's

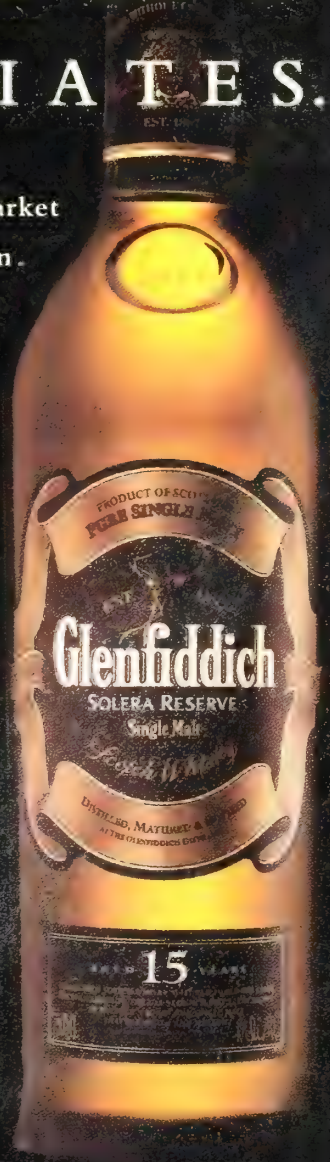
S ce the Second World War, we
v earned how to synchronize our
li ry, economic, and cultural pow-
it order to create and maintain the
n ts of empire at comparatively
v ost. Lapham is merely echoing
n r U.S. ambassador George Ken-
n hen he points out the disparity
n en our consumption of resources
i ir population. As Kennan said,
e al of our foreign policy is to
i ain that disparity. Our democracy
s ursued that imperial goal because
s hat the American people want.
s any people with such preroga-
e is ours ever willingly given them
' we were to do so, there would
o be a compelling alternative. It
l be helpful if Lapham actually
d one. Depressingly, most of the
apparently unable or unwilling to
s and seems capable only of pok-
mlessly at the status quo. Since
atus quo in a democratic nation
result of what people, on the
, want, it is hardly surprising that
lull prodding is simply ignored.

A *Dmda*
ston, Ill.

dos to Lewis Lapham. Washing-
oliticians and Pentagon generals
their games blinded by self-ab-
on and visions of glory while the
f the world marches to a different
mer. Having worked for many
with other countries on global
, I, for one, was not surprised that
membership in the United Na-
Human Rights Commission was
enewed—the event, along with
eaction of the press, that occa-
d Lapham's essay. That our "lead-
xpected such renewal to be au-
tic is symptomatic of their
nce. They do not understand
he United States is one, albeit sig-
nt and influential, member of a
member organization and not the
rpiece around which all the oth-
volve. They do not understand
global leadership means.
w let Mr. Lapham dip his truth-
l pen into the ink of our new for-
olicy makers, who assume that
nited States has the right to uni-
lly remake both world law and
history. They intend to fill the
ove all our heads with more dead-

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It says, such as lasers and kinetic weapons, under the name of so-called missile defense. Shame on them. And [illegible] we let them do it, for not only will the future of children "over there" be endangered; the future of our children will be threatened as well. Thus, they do not understand what domestic leadership means.

Colleen M. Driscoll
Director
The Kurtz Institute of Peacemaking
Doylestown, Penn.

The Goldwater Standard

After reading Kevin Baker's review of historian Arthur M. Schlesinger's autobiography ["A Buried Life," May] and then his review of Rick Perlstein's book on Barry Goldwater ["Up from Extremism," August], I now understand that Baker's overriding goal is to assert the supremacy of mainstream liberal politics in the twentieth century. It seems that his book reviews are merely vehicles by which this thesis is to be delivered.

Baker chides Perlstein, repeatedly and perhaps accurately, for ignoring obvious questions raised by his material. But in his zeal to downplay the existence of any kind of mainstream conservative movement in the 1960s, Baker himself ignores some obvious questions. He points out that Barry Goldwater lost the 1964 election 61 percent to 39 percent, a landslide of epic proportions, and that, in 1964, 53 percent of voters identified themselves as Democrats. But then Baker fails utterly to answer—let alone tackle or even *acknowledge the existence of*—a clear question: Why did the country [illegible] to such an extent that Richard Nixon could win the presidency in 1968 and again in 1972? It is wrong to assume that Perlstein has nothing to say on this topic, and it is surely too relevant to Perlstein's thesis for Baker not to address it. Elsewhere, Baker makes the ridiculous assertion that the strong run of liberalism in the United States lasted from 1932 to 1980. The simple existence of the Nixon presidency gives the lie to this notion.

Near the end of his overlong piece, Baker states his thesis outright: "The great story of the 1960s remains what liberalism accomplished." No, the great story of the 1960s was the Vi[illegible] War—a war, everyone will agre[illegible] came to fruition under the Ke[illegible] and Johnson administrations. [illegible] same administrations were the [illegible] important ones (after FDR's) to[illegible] er's beloved liberal tradition bec[illegible] the Civil Rights Act and the [illegible] Society programs. But clearly [illegible] Baker has no interest in recor[illegible] the administrations' domestic an[illegible] eign policies, and chooses to [illegible] the significance of the war. His [illegible] sis of electoral politics duly suff[illegible]

Gideon Glass
Mountain View, Calif.

It is clear that both author[illegible] Perlstein and *Harper's Maga*[illegible] Kevin Baker, who reviewed Perl[illegible] book on Goldwater, understoo[illegible] ther Goldwater nor his vision o[illegible] sic conservatism.

The main problem with Perl[illegible] monster 671-page dissertati[illegible] Goldwater, and Baker's review, [illegible] amount to countervailing ideo[illegible] diatribes from right and left, i[illegible] they end several decades early, w[illegible] helping readers uncloak and tru[illegible] derstand Barry Goldwater as h[illegible] tured and evolved. Baker and Pe[illegible] took at face value much of th[illegible] omous claptrap, written and s[illegible] about Goldwater during the can[illegible] of 1964, that emanated from th[illegible] son Rockefeller and Lyndon B.[illegible] son camps and was embellishe[illegible] shamefully biased press corp. Jo[illegible] Knight, publisher of the old C[illegible] *Daily News* and *Akron Beacon J*[illegible] and a responsible lion of the jo[illegible] ism of that period, was so disgus[illegible] lashed out in one of his famous E[illegible] Notebooks:

> I can no longer stand silently [illegible] watch the shabby treatment Gol[illegible] is getting from most of the news [illegible] . . . Of the syndicated columnists [illegible] think of only a few who are not s[illegible] [illegible] is courting [him] down. [illegible] Some of the TV commentators [illegible] Goldwater with evident disdain ar[illegible] tempt. . . . It is the fashion of ec[illegible] writers to persuade themselves that [illegible] water's followers are either kooks [illegible] Birchers. This simply isn't so.

Goldwater was indeed far dif[illegible] from the caricature created by h[illegible] and by the media of the 1960

tle in common with today's
and the conservatives I knew
what Goldwater came to stand
was pro-choice. He was in sup
t gays in the military. He fa
the decriminalization of drugs,
this was not widely reported
his lifetime. To the end of his
oldwater was greatly disturbed by
ne's was "the sinister influence
ney in politics." In short, if he
still in the Upper Chamber, it is
ikely he would have preceded
r Jim Jeffords of Vermont off
publican reservation. Goldwa-
r died in 1998, told me several
es that he was thoroughly dis
mted by the hordes of
nservatives and hard-right Re-
ans "who don't understand the
ng of the word 'conservative.'"
d then there are those thirty
he uttered at the G.O.P. con-
on that were so devastating to
reer and caused him to be la-
an extremist: "I would remind
pat extremism in the defense of
is no vice! And let me re-
you also that moderation in the
t of justice is no virtue!" To me,
are the passionate, stirring, and
ful words of an American patri-
h sweeping vision and a deep
itment to the ideals on which
ation was founded. Might not
have been the words of our rev-
tionary forebears who rose up
t monarchical oppression in sup
f liberty and carved a new nation
the American wilderness? They
"extremists," as was every nation
oup of dissidents willing to take
e—and even die—for freedom.

Admittedly, I am a bit touchy when
day "experts" purport to provide
hentic profile of the former Ari-
enator. In my book, *Goldwater:
Tribute to a 20th Century Political
published last year), I describe
s "the most misrepresented ma-
litical figure of the past century."
tunately, Perlstein and Baker
dd to that misrepresentation.

Tom H. Rentschler
Forest, Ill.

leil to Miles to Cohen

much of Rich Cohen's snap
essay-length brickbat to the

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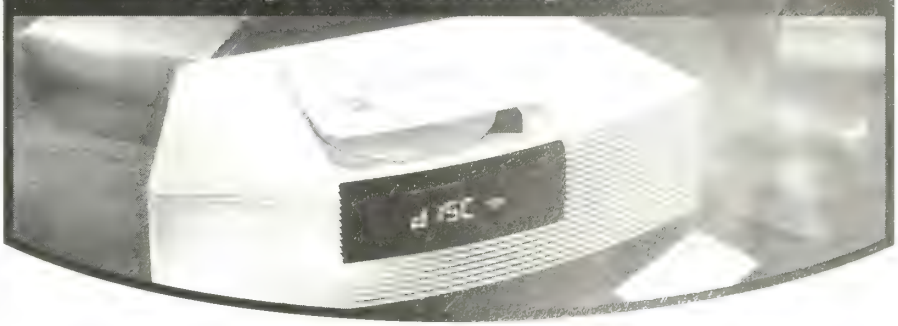
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woeful Chicago Cubs ["Down and Out at Wrigley Field"] is a tired, ill long-winded, recapitulation [illegible] Sosa's salsa-playing was a clubhouse cancer; Sox fans waxing philosophical about a tradition and pathology [illegible] what." An [illegible] analyzes the sun in Cook County. Predictably, we learn [illegible] that there are no deeper disappointments than those of a onetime believer scorned, and disabused.

Cohen's homecoming as an adult man remembering the naive hero worship of his youthful self (and all those trips down from Winnetka "riding the public bus"!) not only proved a disappointment; his visit also reminded our sensitive scribe that not everyone wants to be his friend. The beat writers from the dailies didn't embrace him? Boo-hoo. Sammy Sosa takes grant shits and plays his boom box too loud? *¡Caramba!*

Cohen, the cerebral outlander, continues in what is now an established, if not proud, *Harper's* tradition of sending non-reporters after stories in Illinois. As is now the rule, the essayist, having sallied forth, returns with a tale exposing the feckless boobs who populate the Land of Lincoln's fourth estate and detailing the estrangement a writer from *Harper's Magazine* naturally feels among the unwashed and monosyllabic. (I am thinking, specifically, of David Foster Wallace's *Harper's* piece "Ticket to the Fair." In that 1994 essay, Wallace, insouciantly dressed for a press conference in ragged T-shirt, made plenty of hay about the downstate rubes covering the opening of the State Fair for small market towns all over Illinois.) Rich Cohen and his editor [illegible] have nothing in mind with "Down and Out at Wrigley Field" aside from [illegible] navel-gazing.

Brett McNeil
Oak Park, Ill.

I am one of the "beat writers" who, according to Rich Cohen, turned their back on him when he attempted to say hello—to be exact, the "middle-aged, balding, red-haired one" from the "third paper" Cohen had never heard of. (It's the *Daily Herald*.) We beat writers often get just minutes to compose a story after night games, but we strive to get our facts right and succeed most of the time. As somebody who had a year to work on a story, Cohen should have been as diligent:

Cohen states that the Chicago Cubs were stripped of the home-field advantage in the 1984 playoffs because Wrigley Field did not have lights. Nothing could be further from the truth, despite current urban legends in Chicago. In those days, the championship series in each league alternated the home-field advantage. In 1984 the National League East team, the Cubs, was scheduled to host the first two games of the playoffs all along. The loss of home-field advantage would have occurred in the World Series, if the Cubs had advanced that far. The National League was scheduled to host games one, two, six, and seven, and that's what happened when the San Diego Padres advanced.

The other errors in the article were of the niggling variety; to wit:

1) Pitcher Kevin Tapani signed with the Cubs as a free agent; he was not traded to the Cubs.

2) The Cubs did not lead the Mets by eight games on September 1, 1969. The lead already had shrunk by then. And the Mets did not sweep the World Series. Baltimore won game one before losing the next four.

3) The Cubs were not swept by the San Francisco Giants in the 1989 playoffs. The Cubs won game two.

4) Finally, the heralded double-play combination of the early twentieth century was Tinker to Evers to Chance, not "Tinkers to Evers to Chance."

Bruce Miles
Schaumburg, Ill.

Rich Cohen responds

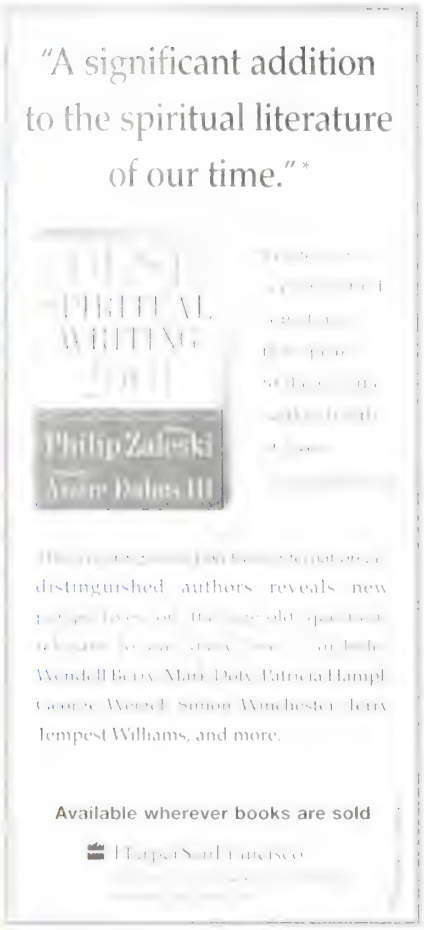
To me, these letters offer a personal lesson: no matter what you do in your life, you wind up right back in the bleachers at Wrigley Field, where, as a matter of course, yo argued with, yelled at, questi and sometimes even corrected of all, in the manner of a hu years of Cubs management, I like to acknowledge and apo for my errors. In addition to mentioned, I identified Joe Ga la Jr. as a catcher; in fact, Joe S the catcher of the family. Al the 1984 National League Ch onship Series, the Cubs did not a lead into the seventh inning three losses; in two of those the Cubs never even had the le

Bruce Miles has indeed caug in a few mistakes. And yet the of his letter suggests what, i course of my work on this st came to believe is one of the ing problems with our nationa time: it is not the home run many) or the pitching (too thi a general decline in sports rep which, in the past, surrounde game with such drama and telling and color. In a sens newspaper writers, perhaps fin impossible to compete with th ment-by-moment highligh ESPN, have retreated into the tiae, losing the forest for the or, as my father always says, th for the trunks. With eyes fix only the small facts, such rep miss the bigger truths. For exa what does it mean for a talente lete to be signed by a club that wins? What does it mean, yea year, to watch your team fail wish I had tried a bit harder to friends with Bruce Miles, th then maybe we could have t about it over a Schlitz, like fan

As for Brett McNeil, what say? He sees me as an outlande truth is, my criticism and my i in the team are motivated by For that reason, his jibes glar like Ping-Pong balls. I rec them as the tantrums of an lover scorned. And if he wa damn me as just another Davi ter Wallace, cool by me. By th I thought it was pretty funny Sosa, baseball's smiling Mr. announced his presence on th by shouting out the glorious n his great big dump. That's baseball is all about.


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VOL.





THE BOSTON UNIVERSITY
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O

dusty windows a glimpse of the Charles River. Perhaps the most remarkable such workshop occurred when

Award, the Barnard New Women Poets Series, reprint from the NEA, and the Norma Farber First Book

out of time in that river view

Tourist Rap

I found it difficult to get past th first paragraph of the August Ne Books. Guy Davenport opens his d cussion of a new Kierkegaard biogr phy with a vignette that shows us group of Japanese tourists, with the funny cameras around their neck ar their funny pronunciation, in ord to present himself by contrast as e haustively at ease with Kierkegaar welcomed into Kierkegaard's hou with winks and nods, recognized one of the inner circle by virtue his excellent pronunciation.

I have spent a lot of time with e ucated Japanese, and one thing I' found is that when a name d come up in conversation you can b they have a serious acquaintan with the thinker. On the oth hand, I'm acquainted with the ki of glib name-dropping and fashio able poses that pass for knowled here, and nothing in the ensuing d cussion of "Socks Kierkegaard" a his foppish clothes and the "tedi and demanding" books about h makes me think the writer is any l cheap and meretricious than I opening gambit. How does he kn what the Japanese visitors' relati to Kierkegaard was? How does know which of them has stayed up night and wept at the sickness a failure of his or her soul?

To use this tactic of excludi others in order to talk about on own "genuine" relation to know edge is distasteful beyond words, t intellectual equivalent of Alfor D'Amato.

Joseph A. Murphy
Department of African and Asi Languages and Literature
University of Florida
Gainesville, Fla.

Postmortem

Adam Davidson opens his arti ["Working Stiffs: The Necessary P asites of Capitalism," August] w the line "With death come pa sites." This may sound good, but inaccurate. With death come composers. Parasites are organism such as leeches, mosquitoes, or microscopic parasites that ca



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HARPER'S INDEX

Number of bills to reform U.S. election procedures introduced in state legislatures since last November : 177
Percentage voted down, pending, and passed, respectively : 58, 28, 14
Percentage of Americans who say "no one" is the leader of the Democratic Party : 10
Percentage who have no opinion : 51
Members of Congress who voted against this fall's resolution to authorize an armed response to September 11's attack : 1
Members who voted against the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin Resolution to authorize further U.S. attacks on Vietnam : 2
Chances that a U.S. soldier in the Vietnam War volunteered : 4 in 5
Chance that a U.S. soldier in World War II did so : 1 in 3
Number of deserters from the U.S. military last year : 5,320
Chance that a foreign-born U.S. resident's country of origin has undergone U.S. occupation or attack since 1945 : 1 in 6
Year in which the French recognized the murder of two thirds of Turkey's Armenians during World War I as "genocide" : 2001
Number of days after this recognition that Turkey canceled a major order from a French defense contractor : 5
Number of Italian police instructors who were trained for July's Genoa summit by L.A. sheriff's department officers : 32
Percentage change since 1996 in the number of U.S. apprehensions of people trying to cross the Mexican border : +9
Percentage change since then in the number of U.S. border guards assigned there : +60
Percentage change since 1999 in the number of people who died on U.S. soil while crossing the border illegally : +56
Estimated number of Colombians who live in "Bill Clinton," a homeless settlement near Cartagena : 10,000
Factor by which the number of West Bank houses demolished by Israel this year exceeds the number demolished last year : 8
Weeks before the World Trade Center attack that Ariel Sharon referred to Yasir Arafat as "our bin Laden" : 11
Hours after the attack that an Alaska congressman speculated that it may have been committed by "eco-terrorists" : 9
Rank of gas mileage among the 35 things Americans say they look for in buying a new car or truck : 20
Percentage of Americans who live within a half mile of nuclear-waste transport routes to a proposed dump in Nevada : 18
Number of business days given Nevada citizens last summer as notice of the only public hearing on the 7,300-square-foot site : 10
Prison sentence, in years, received in June by an Oregon activist for setting fire to a car dealership : 23
Number of cars destroyed in the fire : 3
Number of days a Quebec protester was jailed in April for allegedly catapulting three stuffed animals at police : 17
Number of turkeys raised in the United States last year, per American : 0.95
Percentage change since 1999 in annual sales of Tofurky : +43
Ratio of New York bird deaths last summer attributed to West Nile virus to those attributed to pollution : 2:3
Percentage of Manhattan's population killed during the cholera epidemic of 1832 : 50
Minimum number of U.S. food products recalled in the last year due to contamination from StarLink corn : 336
Total cumulative profit earned by the Nasdaq's 4,200 companies since September 1995 : 0
Amount spent last year on company credit cards issued to federal government employees : $17,300,000,000
Number of high-security federal buildings that undercover U.S. agents entered last year using fake I.D. : 19
Number of years that Osama bin Laden's half-brother owned the Houston Gulf Airport before his death in 1988 : 6
Number of years since then that the airport has been owned by his estate : 13
Percentage change since 1999 in the annual number of ships worldwide attacked by pirates : +57
Estimated percentage change since 1997 in the population of two species of vultures in India : –90
Number of sparrows requested by Chinese farmers in September to help end a plague of locusts : 20,000
Age, in months, at which an infant can distinguish between a bird and an airplane : 9

Figures cited are the latest available as of September 2001. Sources are listed on page 89.
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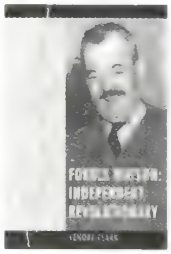


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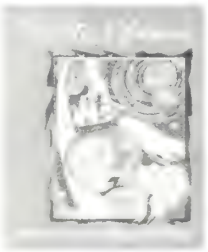
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READINGS

[Presentation]

BEYOND THE GOLDEN PARACHUTE

From a lecture delivered in August to ISC participants of a textiles conference at Tampere University of Technology in Finland. The talk was given by "Hank Hanly Unruh" [an imposter posing as a representative of the World Trade Organization. "Unruh" is a member of the Yes Men, an activist group that maintains a website at [illegible] *that parodies the website of the World Trade Organization. The group received an email message inviting the WTO to send a speaker to the conference, which was attended by international business leaders and academics. The speech was well received, and the master of ceremonies praised it three times during the day.*

It's an honor to be here in Tampere, addressing this audience of the most outstanding textilians in the world today.

[*Slide: Company logos, human faces*]

Looking around at this diverse sea of faces, I see representatives of outstanding corporations like Dow, Denkendorf, Lenzing—all at the forefront of consumer satisfaction in textiles. I see members of the European Commission, Euratex, and other important political bodies that aim to ease rules for corporate citizens. I also see professors from great universities walking into a prosperous future hand in hand with industrial partners, using citizen funds to develop great textilic solutions to be sold to consumers for profit and progress.

I see on all of your faces a touching, childlike eagerness to tackle the biggest textiles questions today. At the same time I see a deep understanding that some of these solutions may not be easy but that come what may we have to press on into a future that few of us understand, except in terms of its dollar results.

[*Slide: Happy faces*]

How do we at the WTO fit in? Well, that's easy: We want to help you achieve those dollar results. We want to help [illegible] ing [illegible] protectionism will [illegible] physical property [illegible] lar results.

What do we want? A free and open global economy that will best serve corporate owners and stockholders alike. When do we want it? Now.

[*Slide: Charles Darwin*]

It's like Darwin said: if you look at nature, one thing is clear, and that's that things go well and just like nature, the market sorts itself out. But like all of us, even wild animals, the market can use some [illegible] committed to helping the market help those who need it the most. We're using a variety of techniques to do so: lobbying, for example; "guerrilla marketing" and other corporate techniques [illegible] eralization; and so on. And the WTO is working to resolve two of the biggest problems for management: maintaining rapport with a distant workforce and maintaining healthful amounts of leisure.

But first, how did the workers ever get to be a problem? Before unveiling the solution, I'd like to talk a bit about the history of the worker/management problem.

[Game]

ANARCHY IS FUN!

From the description of a video game, State of Emergency, that was released in September by Rockstar Games. The game features five characters: Bull, Phreak, 8 Ball, Libra, and McNeil.

State of Emergency is an urban-riot game set in the near future, when the oppressive American Trade Organization (ATO) has declared a state of emergency. State authorities are clamping down on organized resistance and restricting movement across the city to counter the spread of revolt. It is up to you to smash up everything and everyone in order to destabilize the ATO.

Use any item available to begin fighting. It's a riot—a violent free-for-all—and you can smash everything and everyone in order to make your way through the game. Play as one of five different Resistance agents fighting to overthrow the ATO. Hit everybody! Smash everything! Wrecking your surroundings by looting stores and bombing cars is a key aspect of the game.

Seek and destroy with traditional weapons (grenades, rockets, shotguns, machine guns, flamethrowers, and gas bombs) and improvised instruments of pain (pipes, bricks, benches, trash cans, dismembered body parts). Complete missions in Progressive Mode, or just roam the streets causing mayhem in Freeplay mode. Help[illegible] react realistically to violence by cowering, running away, or calling to the nearest Peacekeeper for help.

There are four expensive, destructible districts with at least thirty missions apiece. The missions force the player into challenging scenarios—from assassinating ATO leaders to avoiding Peacekeeper death squads and rescuing [illegible] supporters.

This is the first game ever to let you participate in relentless street combat with over one hundred people on-screen at once! State of Emergency is a game for those who have always wondered what it is like to be armed and dangerous in a city gone out of control.

[*Slide: Civil War*]

The first leg of our journey is back to 1860s America. We all know about the U.S. Civil War—the bloodiest, least profitable war in the history of America, a war in which unbelievably *huge* amounts of money went right down the drain. And all for textiles!

[*Slide: Paradigm shift*]

Of course, this war is most famous for having effected a mighty change in the management paradigm from a central-owner hierarchical model to a much more decentralized, fluid model—a real "hippie revolution" kind of paradigm shift! But what caused the Civil War?

CAUSES OF THE CIVIL WAR: PROTECTIONISM

[*Slide: Freedom*]

Why did people fight and die and lose money? It comes down to one word: FREEDOM.

[*Slide: Southern happiness*]

By the 1860s, the South was utterly flush with cash. It had recently benefited from the cotton gin, an invention that took the seeds out of cotton and the South out of its preindustrial past. Hundreds of thousands of workers, previously unemployed in their countries of origin, were given useful jobs in textiles. Into this rosy picture of freedom and boom stepped . . . you guessed it: the NORTH.

[*Slide: North*]

The South, of course, wanted to buy industrial equipment where it was cheapest and to sell raw cotton where it fetched the highest price—in Britain. The North, however, decided the South should NOT have the FREEDOM to do this but instead should HAVE to do business with the North, and only with the North.

The North used its majority stake in the country's governance to exploit the Southern landowners and deny them their freedom to choose the cheapest prices; this of course made them very angry. You'd be angry too if you were denied your freedom of choice! And so the North's abusive tariff practices basically caused what otherwise was a perfectly good market to spiral into a hideously unprofitable war.

CIVIL WAR AS EXCUSE FOR ELIMINATING IWF: A THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

[*Slide: No excuse for war*]

Some Civil War apologists have said that the Civil War, for all its faults, at least had the effect of outlawing an Involuntarily Imported Workforce. Now, such a labor model is of course a terrible thing. I myself am an abolitionist. But in fact there is no doubt that left to their own devices markets would have eventually replaced slavery with "cleaner" sources of labor anyhow.

[*Slide: Thought experiment*]

To prove my point, come join me in what Albert Einstein used to call a "thought experiment."



[ ]

THE MILITARY INFERIORITY COMPLEX

The following memorandum was sent on June 7th 1993 from [illegible] Assistant Undersecretary [illegible] Office of Public Affairs, to the Department of Defense Public Affairs Committee.

[illegible] the Office of Public Affairs has received the most recent report from the Department of the Army concerning [illegible] Department of Defense Public Affairs Committee [illegible] Department of the Army concerning [illegible]

[illegible] the proposal to establish a [illegible] group of dumbos and halfwits who wouldn't [illegible]

[illegible] a president by a uniformed soldier is not acceptable [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[

LOSING THE WAR ON CLICHÉ

A



Milking the Pastoral, *a painting by Dan Ford. Ford's work is currently on exhibit at Four Walls Projects in Brooklyn*

[*Slide: Protest*]

The MLS provides a number of nonconfrontational solutions as well. With the MLS, officials of the WTO will be able not only to see protests but to *feel* what's going on in the hot spots of the world. What will the danger level be when the first protester is beheaded? I'm against beheading, but they do that in Qatar, where we're holding our next meeting.

[*Repeat slide: Corporate boardroom*]

Is this sunny scene the future of corporate life? No, everything we've been talking about is possible with technologies we have available today. And even more interesting solutions are being developed: interactive textile materials, adaptable materials for smart clothing, living shirts that monitor the wearer's vital signs and motion . . . The prime movers pioneering these remarkable tools will be telling us about them in the next few days.

Also here are the regulators, trade officials, and others who make the world go round—including my colleague at the European Commission, who will show us tomorrow the importance of always looking forward on the highways of progress toward ever new horizons, with cooperation and mutual [illegible] in the interest of prosperity.

I am very excited to be here. Thank you.

[Exchange]

WE ARE THE WORLD

The following letters were written last December by students in Bilbao, India, and Karachi, Pakistan. Amitava Kumar, an Indian writer, asked the children to write the letters to their counterparts across the border. Kumar, who teaches at Penn State University, is the author of Passport Photos.

To dearest Indian child,

Hello! I am also a child like you, from across the border—i.e., from Pakistan. I know that we had a very bad impression for each other because of the wars which broke out between us in the past, but sincerely I really like you people and your country. I also watch Indian channels. The best thing about your dramas is that they show harmony and peace in joint families, which is not here in Pakistan.

We all were once part of the same country, so please, for those past times' sake, if there was [illegible] between us it should come to an end.

One thing more! Why do you make movies fighting against Muslims like *Border*? Can't you

make films with Hindus and Muslims living with each other?

In the end, I wish that you would also consider that my letter is of right opinion.

Lots of Best Wishes

Dear Sufi,

I would like to ask you about your lifestyle and tell you about our way of living. I think you people are very strict about your lifestyle. Is that so? I believe the girls out there always have to cover their faces all the time. Why is that so? I don't think you all are allowed to go anywhere on your own or interact with a lot of people.

Bye,
Rohini

Hi. How are you, hope you are fine. I was feeling really bored, so I decided to write you a letter. We know that Pakistan and India are terrible enemies of each other but don't forget your government was the one who really irritated us and wanted us to establish a Muslim state. Sorry for that but nowadays whenever we have our cricket matches we become enemies again. I want to clear one thing: that we are thought to be friendly with Muslims and other belonging religion people.

With love from,
Sara

Dear Friend,

I don't know anything about you, but I think that you are very nice. The only difference between us is our religion, but I still think that you are very nice. You people are very friendly, and I sometimes think how good it will be if we live together again without any differences.

Your friend

Hi! How are you? I hope you are fine. I am writing this letter because I was told to write a letter to someone on the other side of the border and to tell the person what we feel about Indian people.

The thought that comes to my mind by hearing the name of India is ruthless killing and hatred in Kashmir. Frankly I don't really like Indian people. Why can't India leave the poor Kashmiris alone and let them decide about their future?

Well, Hindus and Muslims are two different nations. Muslims are not allowed to eat anything with a Hindu, and I don't have any Hindu friends, so I don't know much about them, but I don't really think the relations of Pakistan with India are very good.

Sareha Rah

Dear Manas,

I am fine. How are you? Here everything is all right now. Few days back there was [illegible] groups of people. I don't know who sent them and what was their motive. Some people said that Pakistan had done it. Some said Pakistan did not. But I think that it has been done by Pakistan itself for Kashmir which does not belong to it.

Now I'm ending my letter.

Your Friend,
Pushpak

Dear Friend,

I have never had any experience with an Indian my age, but recently when I downloaded ICQ, I bumped into a guy older than me, Manoj. He's twenty-four, and one of the first questions he asked me was "Do you mind me being a Hindu?"

Politics—why should they come in our way and prevent normal people from being close to their neighbors?

And Manoj has come so close to me now. He calls me his behna, and for me, he is bhaiya. He gives me love and respect, and I love him, too. I wonder, is every Indian soooo nice?! Why not reach out to our friends and love them and not be fooled by our "leaders." After all, is land more important or people? So please, be my friend forever.

Love,
A friend

P.S. I used to think of India as a rival, but now I love it as well. It's all so sweet.

Dear Friend,

I am fine here and hope you are also the same. You are a person from the country Pakistan, where people just believe in [illegible] India has always wanted to be a friend of yours, but we need two hands to clap.

Hello, whoever is listening or reading this letter of mine. I am a Muslim or the most hateful thing. I am saying this cuz I have never had a feeling of peace & love b/w the two countries that is U & me. I want to come to your country, but U know what stops me—it's Kashmir. I love everyone I meet & I hate everyone I see who is [illegible] people of Allah.

U & I are the same, we have the same color, creed, culture, etc., but when I see Indian people say bad words to us my blood boils. I feel very sorry for both of us cuz it's not our fault that our elders hate each other. We are all humans & we share the same heart. Can U see [illegible] I want to say too. I think our government should read this & should cry [illegible]

Dear Student,

I hope you will be fine and enjoying your life in India. The purpose of writing a letter to you is to tell you some drawbacks of Indian culture which we all see in Indian films. These are such [illegible] scenes which we cannot see with our families and children can-not even watch Indian movies. There is always the same topic in these movies which is romance. There should be comedy films also which [illegible] with our families easily.

Besides drawbacks there are also some good qualities of Indian movies. There are very good songs. I hope that you will respond me soon.

Your friend,
Zainah Saleem

Dear Children,

Hi! I don't like Indian culture, but I think that India is a powerful country and has some name in the world. I love to see India-Pakistan match but only in those conditions when Pakistan is winning the match. The world thinks that Indian people are really very beautiful, since last two years India won the title of Miss World, but in my view they are not that much intelligent and beautiful to be a Miss World.

Bye.

Dear Indians,

First of all hello!! I am a Pakistani Muslim and I want to inform you that you are liars. You blame Pakistan for every issue. Pakistan wants to establish cordial relations with you, but your government is not ready to do that. I never thought of Indian children, but your government is really . . . What can I say? You are always ready to fight. Can't we live in peace? You attacked Pakistan two times in 1965 and then 1971. This is really bad, and are you not ashamed of yourselves?

I know a Hindu girl of college age. She is really nice.

Dear Friend,

The culture which you people have is not at all good. The main reason of huge population of your country is the bad culture you have. I hope that you have understood what I am trying to say. The other thing which I want to say is that your country should stop all the tortures which they are doing on the people of Kashmir and solve that issue with peaceful negotiations.

From your ever loving friend

Dear Mustaq,

The letter which I am writing please read carefully. Why don't you all change the attitude of your mind? Why don't you all think in a positive way? This is all due to the wrong thinkings of your mind that the both countries are facing trouble. Why don't you utilize your minds in creating something good?

I hope you will change the attitude of your mind and try to become better.

Yours lovingly,
Abhisheik Khomka

Dear Friend,

Pakistan has always extended a hand of friendship and mutual cooperation toward its neighboring countries, specially toward India. But we don't know why India and Pakistan's relations remained strained. Kashmir is a Muslim majority province, and India promised that they will occupy Kashmir for some period but they betrayed.

Can't they see the Kashmiri mothers bitterly crying before their children's dead bodies? Can't they see little children crying and searching for their mothers? Can't they feel the empty stomachs of the children?

Doesn't Indian government have any kind heart? I hope in future India and Pakistan will be best friends.

Bye.

Your ever loving friend,
Anumali

Dear friend,

In this letter I will talk to you about "you," your country, culture, etc. I like you, not your prime minister, president, army. Your old culture is very good & interesting. The old way of dressing and jewelry of women is pretty good. I do not like the Indian army because they fight with our Kashmiri friends, and I request you to do something about the Kashmir issue.

I like you but not your country.

Please forgive me if I said something wrong.

[Stories]

RED ARMY TALES

Three previously untranslated stories from The Complete Works of Isaac Babel, *edited by Nathalie Babel, are published this month by W. W. Norton. Translated from the Russian by Peter Constantine, whose translations of several stories by Anton Chekhov appeared in the November 1997 issue of* Harper's Magazine.

AND THEN THERE WERE TEN

Zavady Station. This happened yesterday. About thirty Poles were sitting tight in the stone building by the junction of the railroad tracks.

The chief of staff himself got involved in the serious business. He strutted in front of our line of men with a revolver in his hand.

"How pointless it is to die at Zavady Station," I thought and went over to the chief of staff.

The Poles broke through our line of men. We brought back ten of them alive. We took them to the field. They looked like a striped blanket laid out on the ground. In front of them, Platoon Commander Golov, mounted, was standing in his stirrups.

"Officers! Own up!" he said, shaking his reins. Blood trickled from his head like rain from a haystack. He had been wounded on the forehead.

"'All officers, step forward!'" he repeated in a thicker voice, getting off his horse.

Suddenly a lanky man with a drooping little mustache stepped forward from the group.

"End of this war!" the man said with delight and began crying. "All officers run away, end of this war!"

And the lanky man held out his blue hand to the squadron commander. On his face was an incomprehensible bliss.

"Five fingers," he muttered, sobbing. "I raising with these five fingers my family!"

And, with burning eyes, he slowly waved his large, wilted hand. Golov pushed it back with his saber.

"Your officers threw their uniforms here!" he yelled. "But we're going to have a little fitting now, and whoever the uniforms fit, I'm going to finish off.'"

He picked out a cap without a brim from the pile of rags and put it on the lanky man's head.

"It fits," Golov whispered. He stepped up closer to the prisoner, looked him in the eyes, and plunged his saber into his gullet. The lanky man fell, shivered, his legs twitching in a frenzy. A foamy, coral-red stream poured from his neck. A young red-cheeked Cossack with silky hair knelt before the dying man. He unbuttoned the man's trousers.

[Untitled]

We are like flies in September. We are sitting limply, as if we are about to expire. We have come together for a meeting of the unemployed of the district of Petrogradskaya Storona.

We have been allotted a spacious hall for this meeting. The advancing rays of the sun—wide, hot, white—lie on the walls.

The talk is being given by the chairman of the Committee of the Unemployed.

He is saying, "There are one hundred thousand unemployed. The factories that have come to a standstill cannot be brought back into action. There is no fuel. The Labor Exchange is inefficient. Even though workers are running it, they happen to be workers who are not very clever, not very literate. The [illegible] is not answerable in its operations to [illegible]. Those [illegible] have the right to declare [illegible]. No good comes of this. [illegible] cannot be [illegible] for anything."

The audience listens passively to the report. It is waiting for the conclusions. The conclusions follow.

"It is essential that these government institutions not employ families as a whole—husband, wife, and children.

"It is essential that the unemployed control the Labor Exchange.

"It is essential that spacious premises be allotted to the Committee of the Unemployed" and so on and so forth.

Boots gleam with a black sparkle under the chairs. It is common knowledge that an unemployed worker, with a lot of free time and a little money left over from his severance pay, will spit assiduously on his boots every morning to give himself the illusion of activity.

The speaker has stopped. Awkward, subdued men in stunted coats come up to the podium. The unemployed of Petrograd give speeches about their great neediness, the five-ruble assistance, and the supplementary ration cards.

"Our people have gotten so quiet," an aged toothless voice whispers timidly behind me. "Our people have gotten so meek. Look how quiet the people's expressions are."

[From]

UNTITLED

By Per Petterson. From Out Stealing Horses, *Supplement* [illegible] *(Portobello Books, 2007).*

Lucie Brady, Emily Hasler and I
currents, where we re-

garded a number of myxomatosic
leporids, mirroring

hominid exit (slime-swollen, tumoral)

which, you with certainty know,
will not be very long now.

"One quiets down," another voice answers in a rich and rumbling bass. "Without food, your [illegible] on the one hand it's hot, on the other there's no food. The people, I tell you, have fallen into silence."

"That is true, they have fallen," the old man

The orators changed. All were applauded. The intelligentsia took the rostrum. A shy man with a little beard, distracted, coughing, covering his eyes with the palm of his hand, informed the audience that Marx has been misunderstood, that capital should be put to work.

The orators finished speaking, and the public began to disperse. Only the sullen-faced workers stayed behind, waiting for something.

A worker of about forty, with a kind, round face, red with emotion, comes up to the platform. The speech he gives is incoherent.

"Comrades, the chairman has just spoken here, others too . . . I think that's fine, I don't know how to express my thoughts. At the factory they ask me, 'Who are you with?' I tell them, 'I don't belong to no one, I'm illiterate, give me some work, I'll feed you, I'll feed everyone. The men came to the factory with newspapers, they all yelled their throats out. I was standing at the back, Comrades, I didn't belong to no one, give me some work.' . . . One of them made a great speech—and what do we see? He turns out to be a commissar yelling orders—March around the Labor Exchange!—so what are we supposed to do? March around the Labor Exchange, and then around Petrogradskaya Storona, and then around the whole of Russia? . . . What's the point of all that, Comrade?"

The worker is interrupted. A roar shakes the hall. The applause is deafening. The orator is bewildered, elated, he waves his arms and kneads his cap.

"Comrades, I don't know how to express my thoughts, but they fired me, and what is there left for me to do now? We all learned about justice. If there is justice, if we are the people, then that means the Treasury is ours, the forests are ours, the estates are ours, all the land and water are ours. Push us forward! We stood at the back, we are completely blameless, we've ended up hanging around jobless on street corners. A man cannot keep on living with such worry . . . Everyone's our enemy, the Germans and others too, and I wore myself out knocking them down . . . about justice I wanted to say . . . if we could find a little work this summer, and ill . . ."

This last orator was successful, the most successful, the only one who was successful. When he came down from the podium, the workers lifted him in the air, clustered around him, and everyone applauded.

He smiled happily.

"It's never been my thing to talk," he said, looking around him. "But from now on, Comrades, I will go to all the meetings, I have to say what's what about work!"

He will go to all the meetings. He will speak. And I am afraid that he will be successful, this last orator of ours.

AT THE STATION: A SKETCH FROM LIFE

This happened about two years ago at a godforsaken railway station not far from Penza. In the corner of the station a group had gathered. I joined them. It turned out that they were sending a soldier off to war. Someone, drunk, was playing a concertina, raising his face to the sky. A hiccuping youth, a factory hand by the look of him, his thin body quaking, reached out his hand to the man with the concertina and whispered, "Come, make our souls weep, Vanya!"

Then the youth walked away and, turning his back to the crowd, slyly and carefully poured some eau de cologne into a glass of Khanzha liquor.

A bottle of lusterless liquid was passed from hand to hand. Everyone drank from it. The soldier's father was sitting pale and silent on the ground nearby. The soldier's brother was vomiting incessantly. He keeled over, his face lolling into the vomit, and passed out.

The train pulled in. They began saying their goodbyes. The soldier's father kept trying to stand up—he couldn't open his eyes, let alone get on his feet.

"Get up, Semyonich," the factory hand said. "Give your son your blessing!" The old man didn't answer. The others started shaking him. A button on his fur hat hung loose. A constable came up to them.

"How disgusting!" he muttered. "The man is dead and they're shaking him."

It turned out to be true. The old man had passed out and died. The soldier looked around in dismay. His concertina trembled in his hands and emitted some sounds.

"Just look at you!" the soldier said. "Just look at you!"

"The concertina is for Petka," he added, holding out the concertina.

The stationmaster came out onto the platform.

"Damn loafers!" he muttered. "Some place they've picked to gather! Prokhor, you son of a bitch, ring the second bell!"

The constable hit the bell twice with the large iron key to the station toilet. (The bell's tongue had been ripped out long ago.)

"You should be bidding your father farewell," they told the soldier, "and you're just standing around like an idiot!"

The soldier bent down, kissed his father's dead



Arbor Vitae IV, *a painting by Attila Richard Lukacs, whose work can be seen at the Paula Cooper Gallery.*

hand, crossed himself, and dully walked over to the railway car. His brother was still lying in his own vomit.

They took the old man away. The crowd began to disperse.

"That's sobriety for you," an old merchant standing next to me said. "They die like flies, those sons of bitches!"

"Well, brother, don't talk to me about sobriety!" a bearded muzhik said roughly. "Our people is a people that drinks. Our eyes need to be all fuzzy."

"What did you say?" the merchant asked him.

"Take a look," the muzhik said, pointing at the field. "It's black and endless."

"So?"

"Well, nothing, really. You see the murk? The people's eyes have to be like that too. Murky."

[Anthems]

FOR YOUR EARS ONLY

The following [illegible] Their Primary Work Is Called Spying, a compilation of songs [illegible] Russian secret police. They were compiled [illegible] Foreign Intelligence Service on the occasion of its eightieth anniversary. Translated from the Russian by Boris Fishman.

[illegible]
We take the pick of our glorious nation,
We take pride in our great state.
Charged with the safety of our land,
We've shrouded history in glory.

[illegible]

We faithfully maintain our vow.
[illegible]
Russia, only you will ever know.

Glory, proud glory,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

We've buried all our comrades
Who weren't meant to return,
Who perished in invisible fires.
And for their luck, they performed their sacred duty

Folks proud of our beginnings
Cozy up behind our walls
Our strength is in our replacements,
The falcons of the new intelligence.

[illegible]
No speeches, just a silent farewell.
May good fortune accompany him.
A friend leaves on assignment.
It'd be easier to leave in his place

With him, an accurate shoot-out,
A loyal support team, reliable contacts,
And hope that he scrambles out of a swamp
If the wind carries him there.

[illegible]
Land out on headquarters' maps.
A friend leaves on assignment.
With him [illegible]

And that during invisible clashes
On the fronts of wars undeclared
The resolute bullet avoids him
And victory finds him instead.

But tomorrow, a telephone call
Will [illegible]
And the [illegible]
[illegible]

Even if destiny laughs at predictions,
When you shake his hand for the last time,
Wish your friend a fond farewell
And tell him you'll see him again.

WAR
Day like night and night like day,
No way to get some rest.
[illegible]
[illegible]
We carry out our orders.

Only yesterday, my friend said
We'll be going home soon.
[illegible]
And made other plans for him.

[illegible]
Who's right and who's wrong.

The one who shoots at night
During the day walks smiling among us.

Spying burns all bridges,
No posthumous medal for us
They put up crosses for us back home,
Stars blazing overhead.

Don't be sad, have a smoke,
Move closer to the campfire,
And ask God to watch over us tomorrow.
We'll reminisce about our mothers and our homes
And dream of returning one day
If only somehow they don't kill us.

|Msgs|
POETRY IN MOTION

The following cellular text messages were submitted last spring to The Guardian *in London. The newspaper offered a £1,000 prize to the best "telepoem" not exceeding 160 characters. The winning entry appears first.*

txtin: messin,
mi headn'me englis,
try2rite essays,
they all come out txtis.
gran not plsed w/letters shes getn,
sweats i wrote better
b4 comm2nn
&she's african

Pls, stop sendg msgs2ths
no, i am not linda,
I hv not slept w/yr sis,
+i wd nvr call anyI's ma a slag.
Gd luk w/viag.
Luv, yr wrong no. xxx

What about
all the spare vowels?
I save mine
and I keep them in a shoe box.
When I'm an old man,
I'll find them
in my attic
and show them to my grandchildrn

They phone you up your mum & dad.

Voter! You've been selected
[illegible]
Press this message on 2 4 other people
Or risk 4 years bad luck.
I'm proudly wearing a stain of your sperm on

the sleeve of my pullover. I refuse to have it washed. It reminds me of you, and of post-structuralism.

Peering into the wet stump of my last bi-headed jelly baby. Coldly. There is no room for pity.

bed, u have seen some action.
doors, some slam
Landlord, u may remove
every chip, scuff, stain: who knows
what reflections
old mirrors project in the dark

Shall I compare thee 2 a London day?
Thou art more pissy + more cold;
The homeless shake their Big Issues,
Whilst u grapple with your small ones

In the dust on the table,
You wrote "I love you."
Today I polished the furniture.

[Essay]

BRICK WALL

By Charles D'Ambrosio, from the Fall 2000 issue of Nest.

Now what remains of the place is an anonymous wall of brick, but not so long ago my uncle ran a bar at 112½ Clinton Street, the half being our family's share, in the City of Big Shoulders, Chicago. If the Sears Tower were considered the gnomon of a sundial, and you were inclined to tell time by organizing shadows, then the bar was located at roughly ten o'clock in the morning. By midmorning the shadows swept in, the air darkened, and the streets turned silty, creating sunken rivers of early night, murky and unpromising to most people but suiting just fine the shady temper of the hard-core drinkers and gamblers the bar catered to. In fact they came precisely for that halfness, that demimonde aspect of the address. The building itself occupied an alley that had formerly served as a cattle run from the trains to the stockyards and packing plants on the South Side. Soon after the butchering ended the bar opened for business. When I lived in Chicago, those old abattoirs, long ago lost to history, had become inviolate and fixed in legend, but the city was changing again.

It was destroying itself, or sloughing off its old industrial self, and many of the brick warehouses and factory buildings in the neighborhood, gutted and windowless, deserted, were [illegible] vacant interiors lit only by the fires burning in oil drums. Instead the [illegible] wrecks itself and returns to stone, at least briefly. There were plenty [illegible] in war, but the absence of declared enemies and the lethargic unfolding of time [illegible] seeming the scale of the [illegible]. Factories and warehouses and hotels, these old muscular hopes came down in heaps of brick and mortar, of pulverized concrete and [illegible] stone, and then those cairns of rock, in turn, were cleared off to become barren lots as flat and featureless as the prairie they'd supplanted. Now brand new buildings [illegible] those spaces, but for the duration, for the brief winter, spring, and summer I lived and worked next door to the bar, there was the constant gray taste of mortar on my tongue, my lips burning from the lime it was laced with, as clouds of dust were set adrift by each new day's demolition.

Brick is relocated earth, and the streets of a city like Chicago re-create a riverbank, in this case the clay banks of both the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, where a good portion of Chicago's brick originally came from. The mining of clay is often referred to as "winning," a curious kind of victory, considering that the clay used in brick-making comes from the Carboniferous Period, a subcategory of the Paleozoic, some 340 million years ago; such a vast span of time would seem to temper any man's sense of triumph. It was during the Carboniferous that amniote eggs allowed ancestral birds, mammals, and reptiles to reproduce on land; flight was first achieved, too, as insects evolved wings. And then something happened, something happened to the birds and mammals and reptiles, to the nascent flying insects, to the whole ambition and direction of that geologic age. Everything died off and disappeared in that silent way only an aeon can absorb and keep secret.

And yet with death the vascular plants that existed in tropical swamp forests provided the organic material that became coal. These dead plants didn't decay completely and instead turned to peat bogs. When the sea covered the swamps, marine sediments covered the peat, and the [illegible] transformed these organic remains into coal and shale. Burning brick in kilns only extends and completes the [illegible] from the sense [illegible] brick manufacturers use coal to fire and harden the clay, removing moisture and the last memory, the last vestiges of fluidity from the brick.

[illegible] material is that it's already burned, which ac-



"Untitled," a photograph by Peter Harris, can be seen at the Howard Yezerski Gallery in Boston

During my time in Chicago my day job was to load cars and trucks with reproduction furniture, the historical imperative of which had vanished, vaguely, around the turn of the century. Nonetheless shoppers from the suburbs drove to the city to browse the warehouse, [illegible] backs, bankers' lamps, bakers' racks, oak iceboxes, old phones with a crank on the side that would, with a turn or two, summon the operator. The furniture was hokey, farmy, Depressiony. Of course none of the people who shopped the warehouse were cutting blocks of winter ice to haul by horse and wagon and then to pack and preserve in layers of straw for the long hot summer. They lived in the suburbs; they had appliances. It was curious and teleologically baffling. Why a wrought-iron baker's rack for men and women whose cookies and bread did their cooling at the factory? Why buy an antique that was hardly two weeks old?

The chaotic layout of the warehouse led many customers to believe they might, in some obscure corner, find a rare treasure, overlooked by others. But all this old stuff was absolutely brand-new; we carried special crayons in our pockets to keep it

that way, coloring in the scratches before we showed people their purchases. These people wanted old furniture but perfect, they wanted antiques without time (the main ingredient and, you'd think, the very source of value in anything vintage). Still, the animating urge, the desire for the real, wasn't dead; the day I started the job I noticed nobody bought from the top, no one purchased the front item. Looking behind, for these people, equaled searching for the past, the authentic. Picky, savvy shoppers always made their selections by searching deep into the stacks and piles, mistrusting the surface, the present appearance of things.

Maybe nostalgia is a species of the ideal, a dream of a last interior, where all the commotion of a life is finally rewarded with rest, drained of history. We were selling the memory of something, of hard work and industry, of necessity, of craft and artisanship—the mendacious idea that life was gathered with greater force and organized in superior ways in the past. When you stood in the warehouse the eye was pleasantly bombarded by a vastness filled. But the inspiration for most of the furniture we sold came originally from hardscrabble times, times of scarcity and unrest and an economy based on need, not surplus, and certainly not this absurd superfluity, this crazy proliferation, where 200 oak iceboxes, stacked to the ceiling on layers of cardboard, would easily sell out on a Saturday afternoon. Why were people so avid and enthusiastic for the emblems of hardship? For what idealized interior could this possibly serve as honest décor?

After closing I'd slip a padlock in the loading-dock door, then stay inside: the furniture warehouse was also my home; I lived in there, vaguely employed as a night watchman. Every night I slept on one of about two hundred sofas. I ate takeout dinners on tables that would be sold the next day. I read books by the greenish light of an ugly bankers' lamp, set on a fake-oak icebox. I was hired to deter theft, set out glue traps, and hose down the Dumpsters so that bums wouldn't light the cardboard on fire trying to keep warm. I simplified my job by rigging a cheap alarm system out of magnetic triggers, a hundred yards of lamp wire, and a couple of Radio Shack sirens perched on the windowsills. In the evenings I'd arm the thing by twisting together the exposed copper strands and head next door to my uncle's bar.

You entered the bar through a black door with a diamond peephole. There were nine stools covered in red leatherette. Among the patrons you found a deep well of faith, a certain gut feel for what Catholic theologians would call analogical thinking, whereby you come to know the reality of God through signs. Gambling was how you negotiated the mystical [illegible] and symbol. Winning was always an answer to a question. Most of the men [illegible] the stool they sat on and would rather stand all night than take a seat that had somehow been hoodooed by past bad luck. Many of the gamblers were afraid of the past, haunted by it, and this tilted their faith in the direction of [illegible], less ample, less accommodating idea. On any given night thousands of bloated dollars would sit on the bar in wet frowning stacks. I'd never seen such sums. I drank Old Style and peppermint schnapps and lived off pork rinds and pickled eggs.

Gambling and dim light and slow rising smoke made it seem like everybody in the bar had strange and compelling mysteries behind them. They were dense with background, or so you inferred, because the present, the very surface of life, was so meager, so without evidence or account. In this

[Prohibitions]

BOOOORING!

From a new policy drafted by the Calgary Board of Education, following a hiking trip to Calaroma last year on which two students and a parent chaperone died

Participation in the following activities is prohibited on school property, as a school organized activity, and [illegible]:

- aerial gymnastics
- American gladiator-style events
- bungee jumping
- demolition derbies
- drag racing
- dunk tanks
- horse jumping
- [illegible]
- ice climbing
- luge
- mechanical-bull riding or simulated mechanical-bull riding
- mountain climbing and mountaineering
- open-water swimming
- paintball, laser-tag games, or war games
- [illegible]
- scuba diving
- [illegible]
- spelunking
- tobogganing, tubing, crazy carpet, bobsledding, and sledding
- winter biathlon with firearms

[Claims]

SUCROSE FOR COMFORT

[illegible] claims is from Petretti's Coca-Cola Collectibles Price Guide, *by Allen Petretti*

1[illegible] Coca-Cola is a delightful and nerve drink
1899 Coca-Cola makes flow of thought more easy and reasoning power more vigorous.
1905 The favorite drink for ladies when thirsty, weary, and despondent.
1905 Relieves fatigue and is indispensable for business and professional men, students, wheelmen, and athletes.
1907 The classes and masses all enjoy Coca-Cola.
1907 Coca-Cola—the great temperance beverage—it has none of the ill effects or "let down" qualities of alcoholic stimulants.
1908 Sparkling—harmless as water, and crisp as frost.
1908 The drink that cheers but does not inebriate.
1909 Proves big help for tired housewives.
1911 Eminent chemists in every section of the country declare it to be no more harmful than tea or coffee.
1910 Get what you ask for and see that you get it.
1911 Enjoy a glass of liquid laughter.
1921 Drink Coca-Cola highballs (the morning after).
1926 Life, liberty, and the pursuit of thirst.
1926 Nature's purest and most wholesome drink.
1927 Six keys to the popularity of Coca-Cola: Taste, Purity, Refreshing, Sociability, the Nickel, Thirst.
1927 For that tired, discouraged feeling, drink Coca-Cola.
1931 Every bottle sterilized.
1931 Is[illegible] much—costs so little.
1942 At ease . . . for refreshment.
1943 A casual symbol of pleasant things.
1944 The global high sign.
1945 Coca-Cola helps show the world the friendliness of American ways.
1946 Friendliness and Coca-Cola go together, like bread and butter.
1964 Smart birds go for Coke.
1966 Coke—after Coke—after Coke.
1969 A glass of Coke, a pair of straws, and thou.
1969 Face Uncle Sam with a Coke in your hand.
1969 The drink you eat.

sense my take on these men wasn't all that different from the way the warehouse customers saw our fake antiques. Any "background" I granted them was just another kind of décor, the décor of history, of image—in particular history and image in their arrested or hardened forms, as nostalgia and cliché. The bar was the kind of place where people were "characters" and were known, to the extent that they were known at all, by some fragment of personality, a piece of self broken off and magnified until it was more recognizable than the original man behind it. Character, in the bar, really was fate.

And so a character named Red Devil seemed a proxy voice, speaking for everybody, when he would cackle hysterically and yell out, "Mantina, 1963. I'm history!" Mantina was the state mental hospital, but nothing beyond that was elaborated. To be history in America doesn't mean to be recorded, noted, added to the narrative, but precisely the opposite: to be gone, banished, left behind. To be history is to be cut from the story.

Other characters? Here are two. They even have character names, names I'd avoid if I were writing fiction: Al and George. Al tended the bar at night. He'd been in the Merchant Marine and ate with a fat clunky thumb holding down his plate as if he were afraid the whole place might pitch and yaw and send his dinner flying. He was dwarfish and looked like an abandoned sculpture, a forgotten intention. His upper body was a slablike mass, a plinth upon which his head rested; he had a chiseled nose and jaw, a hack-job scar of a mouth. Sitting back behind the bar smoking Pall Malls, he seemed petrified, the current shape of his body achieved by erosion, his face cut by clumsy strokes and blows. His eyes, though, were soft and blue, always wet and weepy with rheum, and when you looked at Al, you had the disorienting sense of something trapped, something fluid and human caught inside the gray stone vessel of his gargoyle body, gazing out through those eyes. He was my only real neighbor. At closing he'd collect the glasses, wipe down the bottles, shut the blinds, and go to sleep on the bar. In the morning he'd fold his blankets and stow them away in a cardboard box.

George was another fixture in the bar, a salesman working, like me, in the furniture warehouse. He drank beer all day, chased with shots of peppermint schnapps so that his breath would smell fresh, as though he'd just brushed his teeth. Like most drunks, he had the baffling notion that he was getting away with it. I felt sorry for George because he wasn't fooling anybody and couldn't see the truth, that he was being tolerated and temporarily ignored. With his insulin shots, instant coffee, his shabby dress, his elaborate comb-over, he led an obscure life, irregular and unobserved, except at the bar. There he gambled with a ner-

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vousness torqued up tight by a belief in the quick [illegible] everything. Sometime in the past, he believed, things had gone wrong, gone fatally so. The present was his evidence. Divorce. Bankruptcy. Alcoholism. He had a gimpy leg; he was diabetic. He [illegible] the numbers, the state lottery, everything. Sometime in the future there was a wager that would be won, a score that would redress everything, and this injection of faith, more than, say, a visit to the doctor, eased the pain for him.

"When I have money," he told me, "I can't sleep. I can't hardly eat. I don't feel good until it's gone."

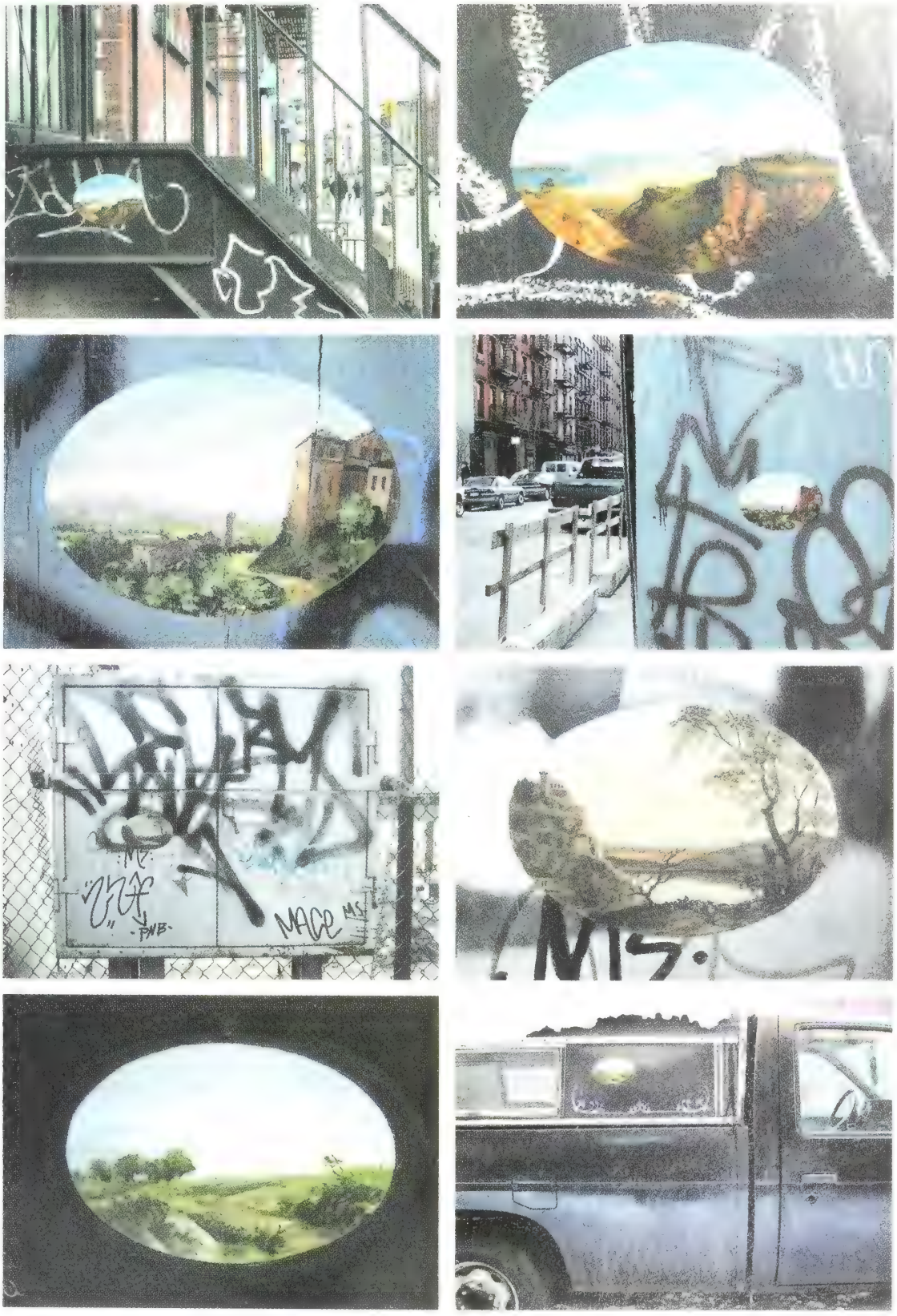
In the bar a small bet was called "an interest bet," a wager that attached you fiercely, with greater vividness, to the flow of an otherwise monotonous day. It offered you a way into time, via the wide and democratic avenue of chance; even the smallest gamble instantly gave you a stake in the outcome of time itself. With a bet on, time had something to show you, held the promise of a revelation. When George was betting he had the sensibility of a psychotic, or a poet. There were nuances to assay, meanings to consider. Accidents became auguries. The odds on unrelated matters changed. Emotions rose to the surface, the buried inner life became relevant, and he grew sensitive, tender, his instinctual self, now resuscitated, engaged in the world's new density. Nothing out in the actual world demanded quite the same concentration of being, the same focused energy. With money on the line, he became aware of time, of his place in it, and planned ahead. On payday he broke half his check into quarters, dimes, and nickels, storing the coins in a coffee can at home; it was the only way he could keep himself from gambling all his money and make sure he'd have enough for food at the end of the month.

Most people in the area around the bar were passing through, transient. They were commuters who caught the trains and left behind an acute emptiness, a hollow around seven o'clock every night. Of course some people came in search of precisely this lacuna, this moment when the day lapsed into nothingness. Richard Speck sought it, holing up at the Shipyard Inn a few blocks away, paying ninety cents a night for his furnished room after he'd murdered eight student nurses. This was 1966, and Speck planned to hop a freight train west but never managed to leave the Loop until he was sentenced to death. The single nurse who survived that attack, hidden flat beneath a bed, figured in my dreams for years. She squeezed herself beneath that bed and for hours listened to the sounds of sex followed by the sounds of death. I was a very young boy when this proto-horrific crime happened, but for some reason I know Speck tenderly asked the last woman he was raping if she'd wrap her legs around him. That winter they tore down the hotel, and I watched from a distance, watched the swing of a wrecking ball as it arced through the air, collided soundlessly, then came through, a couple seconds later, with a laggard explosion of crumbling brick.

At night black men in jalopy flatbeds scavenged through mounds of debris to save the bricks. In a book about brick, D. Knickerbacker Boyd writes: "When two bricks are struck together they should emit a metallic ring." That's true. Bricks clink together with a satisfying ring akin to fine crystal. The sound has a clarity, a rightness. Bricks also improve with age, and highly valued skids of cured Chicago brick were sold to people as far away as Phoenix and San Francisco, people who made walkways, garden walls, and barbecues from remnants of old factories. From my window in the warehouse I'd hear the black men knocking away like moonlighting archaeologists, knocking until the old soft mortar was chipped loose and the clean red brick rang out as resonantly as a bell.

In the bar people kept drinking and betting right up to the very end. One night a stranger appeared and took George by the arm and led him gently, like a church usher, out to the sidewalk. Words were exchanged in pantomime. After a minute the stranger hit George in the head with a length of pipe. George had raised his arms in supplication, beseeching, and when the pipe crashed down, his head bowed penitentially before he slumped to his knees, then fell forward on his face. George owed the man money. It was a confusing sight, seeing him like that, a grown man sprawled out on the sidewalk, small and broken, with no more control over himself than a child.

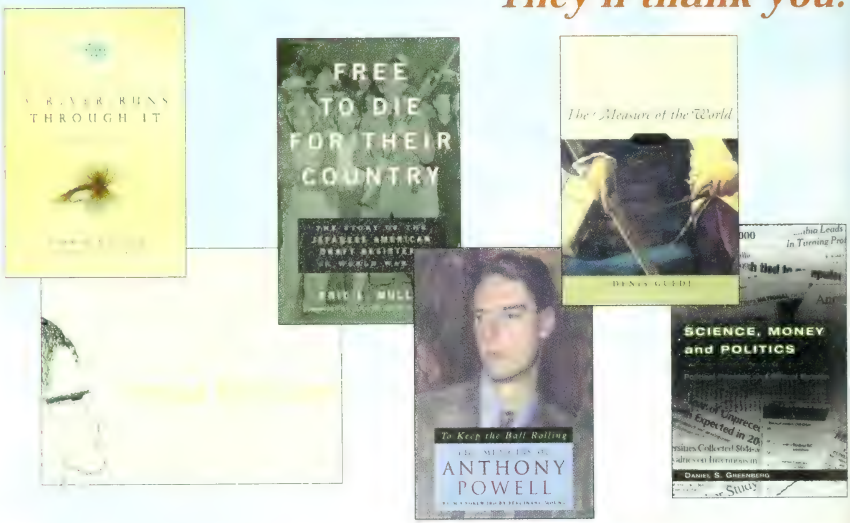
Now when I think of it, I understand it was never so much the potential for gain that animated gamblers like George, these men who had nothing, but being reawakened to a world where loss was once again possible. Loss was their métier, and to have that taken away, to be, finally, lost, was the worst thing imaginable. As long as you could fall farther you distinguished yourself from the fallen. Loss reinstated possibility, but possibility without hope. And perhaps this explains how all of us blithely imagined that the general wreckage would pass over the bar, that it was somehow exempt. Gambling offered a refuge from the outside world, its advances, its mysterious evolution. No one believed the bar would end, not because we didn't believe in progress but instead, more precisely, because our kind of gambling, the wish of it, was an attempt to salvage the past. We weren't so much hoping to change the future as we were trying to amend history. We wanted the past completely restored and made livable. We believed that was the only kind of winning that counted.



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DRUMS ALONG THE POTOMAC

New war, old music

By Lewis H. Lapham

As our case is new, so we must think anew, and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves, and then we shall save our country.

—Abraham Lincoln

The offices of *Harper's Magazine* occupy the eleventh floor of a nineteenth-century commercial building in lower Manhattan, east of Greenwich Village and just over a mile north of the wreckage that was once the World Trade Center. On the morning of September 11, I had come to work earlier than usual, at eight instead of ten, to write my November column on a screening of HBO's *Band of Brothers* that I'd seen the previous Thursday evening at the Council on Foreign Relations. Produced by Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks as a ten-part television series, the film was being billed as the season's newest and most exciting portrait of America the Invincible. Against the grain of the reviews ("shatteringly emotional," "awe-inspiring," "never to be forgotten"), I'd seen the film not as drama but as agitprop, and I was trying to discover my reasons for the opinion when I was surprised by the sound of what I guessed to be an explosion. A distant but heavy sound, not one that I could place or remember having heard before; not a car bomb, probably not a subway tunnel. Maybe a factory in Brooklyn.

No further developments making themselves immediately audible, I returned to my recollection of the scene at the Council's handsome town house on Park Avenue and Sixty-eighth Street and to the presence of the historian Stephen Ambrose seated center stage during the discussion period, his tie sporting the pattern of the American flag, retelling the heroic tale of the D-Day landings on the beaches of Normandy in June of 1944. My notes indicated that a young woman in the after-dinner audience, an Army captain on the faculty at West Point, had asked Ambrose to speak to the secret of leadership, but before I could find the scrap of paper on which I had written down the answer (something about ancient Greeks on the plains of Troy), it occurred to me that I was listening to sirens—ambulances and fire trucks, many of them close by, none of them on the way to Brooklyn. I also noticed that although it was nearly ten o'clock, nobody else was in the office. The only television set on the premises wasn't receiving signals from the major networks, and not until I'd learned to look through the haze of static on one of the cable channels did I discover the pictures of the World Trade Center's twin towers, both of them burning.

THROUGH [illegible]
WHO [illegible]
THE [illegible]
LOSS FOR WHAT TO SAY EXCEPT
THAT IT WAS "UNBELIEVABLE"

Soon afterward other editors began to arrive in the office, their fa[illegible] the second explosion from a subway train on the Manhattan Bridge, of [illegible] strange scent in the air, of bewildered crowds walking aimlessly north [illegible] Broadway. Somebody managed to bring the television broadcasts in [illegible] turn away, saying nothing that wasn't trite ("surreal," "like a movie"), [illegible] the news bulletins and tried to make sense of the story line. The netwo[illegible] played and replayed the montage of horrific images, soon familiar but [illegible] ways seen as if for the first time, never losing the force of a sudden a[illegible] sickening blow, and I don't expect that I'll ever be rid of the sight of [illegible] United Airlines Flight 175 out of Boston coming straight at the south to[illegible] [illegible] men and women, seemingly no bigger than dolls, dropp[illegible] away from the windows of the north tower's upper floors, [illegible] devouring the light in Vesey Street.

Through the whole of Tuesday afternoon and evening the n[illegible] tion's leaders came before the television cameras burdened with r[illegible] and grief but at a loss to say much else except that what had happer[illegible] was "unbelievable" and that the world never again would be the sa[illegible] By nightfall President George W. Bush had returned from Florida [illegible] Washington, his arrival delayed by nervous hesitations at Air Fo[illegible] [illegible] and Nebraska, and at 8:30 P.M., twelve hours after [illegible] first explosion, he addressed the American people with a not very co[illegible] [illegible] show of resolve.

"These acts of mass murder," he said, "were intended to frighten our [illegible] tion into chaos and retreat. But they have failed. Our country is strong."

The message was somewhat at odds with the facts. The losses had b[illegible] immense, far more terrible than anybody could have foreseen and well [illegible] yond anybody's capacity to measure or count. The country might [illegible] strong but it was badly frightened, and the chaos was unmistakable [illegible] roughly 6,000 dead in Manhattan, another 200 dead in the shambles [illegible] the Pentagon, all airline travel suspended, the White House secretar[illegible] running for their lives, a frantic sealing off of the country's nuclear pow[illegible] stations as well as Mount Rushmore, Disneyland, and the Liberty Bell, t[illegible] New York Stock Exchange out of commission and the city's primary m[illegible] oral election postponed, telephone communications down across la[illegible] sectors of the Northeast, Major League Baseball games canceled, t[illegible] Capitol evacuated and most government offices in Washington closed u[illegible] [illegible] further notice, transportation services placed on high alert.

If the President's rhetoric didn't quite meet the circumstances, neit[illegible] did it account for the energy transfers—negative as well as positive [illegible] made possible by the several technological revolutions of the last thi[illegible] [illegible] Listening to him, I couldn't escape the feeling that [illegible] was reading a script not unlike the one that carried Spielberg's "band [illegible] [illegible] in Germany in the spring of 1945.

Wednesday's newspapers confirmed the impression. I didn't read all [illegible] reports or listen to all the television commentaries, but most of the o[illegible] that I did see and hear presented the catastrophe in the context of Wo[illegible] War II—mobilizing the infantry and maneuvering the aircraft carri[illegible] drawing the comparison to Pearl Harbor and declaring another day of [illegible] infamy, calling out the dogs of war:

Robert Kagan, in the *Washington Post*: "Congress, in fact, should imm[illegible] diately declare war. It does not have to name a country."

Steve Dunleavy in the *New York Post*: "The response to this unimag[illegible] able 21st century Pearl Harbor should be as simple as it is swift—kill



N[illegible] AMERICA
BEYOND REPROACH BUT ONE
COULD LIVE COMFORTABLY ON
THE [illegible] TRUST FUND OF LIBERTY
ESTABLISHED ON OMAHA BEACH

[illegible]eir wealth and corporate rank (presidents of banks and insurance co
es, managers of media syndicates, high-ranking military officers, partn
all Street law firms, senior journalists) come to reaffirm their belief
doctrine of American exceptionalism, and the whole of the evening's p
am had buttressed the mood of smiling self-congratulation. First a
uence of scenes from the movie, which follows the advance of a sin
ompany of the 101st Airborne Division on their perilous journey from t
nding in Normandy to the crossing of the Rhine. The soft cinematog
phy and lack of a plot reduces the effect to that of an advertisement or a
cruiting poster, the soldiers in Easy Company indistinguishable not o
from each other but also from a troop of young men outfitted with milit
accessories in a Ralph Lauren catalogue. During the after-dinner discussi
the tone of the questions suggested the flattering murmur of department-st
buyers interested in the marketing strategy for an upscale men's cologne



Several guests had heard rum
about the current generation of
cruits succumbing to the temptati
of cynicism and drugs, and Ambr
was at pains to assure them that
American Army had recovered from
wounds in Vietnam (no more whin
complaint from Bob Dylan's harm
ica), up to the task of defending Gre
wich, Connecticut, and the Ch
Manhattan Bank, glad to pay the pr
of glory. As the author of the best-s
ing book on which the film was bas
Ambrose said that he'd been tourin
around the country on a literary lect
circuit and that he often was ask
whether the kids born after 1980 w
capable of "doing another D-Day."

"My answer is you're damn ri
they could," Ambrose said. "They
the children of democracy. . . . Am
can kids are brought up to know the
ference between right and wrong."

Although everybody was hea
ened by the news, nobody was s
prised. How could it be otherwi
America had saved Western civil
tion in 1945, defeated Hitler and
monstrous Japanese, conceived
Marshall Plan, distributed the gift
trade, industry, and lofty sentiment to the lesser nations of the earth.
supremacy wonderful to behold, and it was good to know (while mak
one's way out to the limousines standing at attention on East Sixty-eigh
Street) not only that America was beyond reproach but also that
could live so comfortably (now and forever, world without end) on
trust fund of liberty established on Omaha Beach and Guadalcanal. T
Greatest Generation deserved a vote of thanks. Not only from their dir
descendants but also from all the people everywhere in the world w
wished they were just like us, embracing the same values, shopping for
same prizes, endorsing the same definitions of the good and happy l
Fortunately for the peace and safety of mankind, our triumph was co
plete; we were the world's only superpower and therefore (once again
nod of thanks to the Greatest Generation) invulnerable.

My memory of the evening in the sky-booth seats of the American
tablishment undoubtedly has been darkened by the irony of its count
point to the devastation, five days later, of the Trade Center and the P

om, but I don't think I misrepresent the character of its CEO if I describe
. I witless boast. I do know that I was frightened by the exhilaration of
at the ancient Greeks (the ones whom Ambrose left on the plains of
oy) would have recognized as the dangerous form of pride they defined
hubris. Here were people well-placed within the hierarchies of Ameri
n business and government, captivated by the iconography of the Pax
nericana but incapable of imagining, or unwilling to acknowledge, a
orld other than the one they had inherited from John Wayne and
onald Reagan and Stephen Spielberg, a world in which America was not
ly inevitably victorious but also universally loved, its motives always
re, its principles always just, and its soldiers always welcomed by pretty
rench girls bearing flowers. The complacence of the American ruling
ass was nothing new under the sun and by no means an unfamiliar sight,
t seldom had I seen it so sleek and fat, and I remember that I was anx-
ious to get quickly away from a would-be statesman in the brokerage business telling me that we had been lucky, really privileged, to see so grand a television show.

Cherished illusions don't die as easily as Israeli or Palestinian children torn to pieces by a truck bomb, and in the aftermath of even so spectacular a calamity as the one visited upon New York and Washington on the morning of September 11, the majority of the television voices continued to say that what they had seen was "unbelievable." But why unbelievable? Do the merchants of the global economy not read their own sales promotions? For the last ten years the apostles of technological change have been telling the customers about the ways in which the new systems of communication confer the godlike powers of government and the freedom of nation-states upon solitary individuals seated in front of a computer in San Jose. The commercial imagery depicts a Mongolian yak herder talking on a cell phone to a fisherman in Tahiti; the ad copy reads, "We're all inter-connected," or, "Invent your own world." Do we suppose that the message doesn't translate into Urdu, that only graduates of Harvard understand the wonders of globalization (among them techniques of money-laundering and electronic encryption), or that the uses of the Internet remain beyond the grasp of Arab street people last seen as background noise in *The English Patient*?

Whoever organized the attack on the United States clearly understood not only the arcana of postmodern finance capitalism but also the idiom of the American news and entertainment media. The pictures of the World Trade Center collapsing in ruins ("shatteringly emotional," "awe-inspiring," "never to be forgotten") were made to the model of a Hollywood disaster film; not a senseless act but cost-efficient and highly leveraged, the arrival of the second plane timed to the expectation of the arriving cameras, the production values akin to those of *Independence Day* and *Air Force One* rather than *Band of Brothers*.

Why then "unbelievable," and from whom do we suppose the terrorists learned to appreciate the value of high explosives as a vivid form of speech if not from our own experiments with the genre in Iraq, Serbia, and Vietnam? Robert McNamara, the American secretary of defense in the summer of 1965, explicitly defined the bombing raids that eventually murdered upwards of two million civilians north of Saigon as a means of communication. Bombs were metaphors meant to win the North Vietnamese to a recognition of America's inevitable victory (also to an appreciation of its goodness and freedom-loving purpose), and American planes dropped what came to be known to the staff officers in the Pentagon as "bomb-o-grams." The NATO alliance adopted a similar approach to the bombardment of Belgrade in March of 1999; the targets, both military and civilian, were chosen for rhetorical rather than tactical reasons, the destruction intended to persuade Slobodan Milosevic to please read the notes being sent to him in the overpolite language of diplomacy. Again in Iraq, in 1991, we imposed harsh economic sanctions on the country in order to send a stern message to Sad-

WE GIVE PEOPLE REASON TO THINK OF AMERICA AS A CORPULENT EMPIRE CONTENT TO PLACE JUSTICE IN THE HANDS OF BRUTAL SURROGATES

dam Hussein, and when Madeleine Albright, then the American secreta of state, was asked in an interview on *60 Minutes* whether she had consi ered the resulting death of 500,000 Iraqi children (of malnutrition and di case), she said, "We think the price is worth it."

I don't wish to argue the rights and wrongs of American foreign polic but how do we find it incredible that other people might not have notice the planes in the sky or the corpses in the street? No fewer than 62 mi lion civilians died in the the twentieth century's wars (as opposed to 4 million military personnel), buried in mud or sand or broken stones in a seasons and every quarter of the globe—in London and Paris as well as i Sarajevo and Baghdad. Why not New York and Washington?

Nor have we been inattentive to the problem of motive. By choosing t support oppressive governments in the Middle East (in Saudi Arabia and I rael as well as in the United Arab Emirates, and, when it suited our purpose in Iraq), we give people reason to think of America not as the land of th free and the home of the brave—a democratic republic to which they migl attach their own hopes of political freedom and economic growth—but a a corpulent empire content to place the administration of its justice in th hands of brutal surrogates. The perception might be wrongheaded and pe verse, failing to account for the prompt deliveries of McDonald's cheeseburge and Arnold Schwarzenegger movies, but the mistake is an easy one to mak in Jiddah when having one's right hand cut off for the crim of petty theft or being sentenced to a punishment of 4(lashes for failing to heed a call to prayer.

Almost as soon as the Trade Towers fell down, a loud caucus d commentators and politicians began to complain about the criminal in competence of our intelligence agencies. We should have known. Whe was the CIA? Why no timely warning or preemptive arrest? Who had ne glected to alert James Bond or Bruce Willis?

The questions missed the point. We had suffered not from a lack of da ta but from a failure of imagination. Accustomed to the unilateral priv lege of writing the world's blockbuster geopolitical scripts, hiring the cas and paying for the special effects, the Washington studio executives sel dom take the trouble to look at the movie from the point of view of a audience that might be having trouble with the subtitles. Why bother Let them eat popcorn and look at the pictures. It isn't only that we don learn the languages.[2] We don't remember history. Obliged to issue a state ment to the cameras while traveling to Washington on September 1 President Bush began by saying, "Freedom itself was attacked this morn ng by a faceless coward." Two days later he was talking about mindles hatred and unfathomable evil.

But it wasn't freedom that had been attacked; an abstract rather than proper noun, freedom is as safe as love or justice from the effects of burn ng kerosene and collapsing steel. Nor were the attackers faceless or thei hatred mindless. The networks were proud to show their photo album c Osama bin Laden (romantic bandit once associated with the CIA), and i wasn't difficult to find university professors prepared to discuss the reason why at least some of the Arabs in the Middle East might have nurtured long and bitter grievance against the American presence in Israel and th

The history lesson was too hard to set to the music of trumpets and drums and most of the media voices (politicians, generals, anchorpersons) chose t place the attack in the self-referential context of the great American shop ping mall. Obviously the terrorists wanted everything in all the suburban shov

[2] ... interviewed two senior officials ... both directing the CIA's intelligence operations in the Middle East and Afghanistan. Neither of them spoke fluent Arabic. Similarly, during the entire twelv years of the Vietnam War, only one American university offered graduate instruction in

ndows, wanted to drive a Lexus, own a beach house in East Hampton, wear
. Armani suit. Unhappily, they couldn't afford the prices because, in the
rase of one of the experts on CBS, "They hadn't done too well in the mod-
n world." Thus their envy and resentment. An expression of childish rage
a proof of possession by the Devil. Nothing to do with history or politics,
t alone a philosophical objection or a legitimate argument against a glob-
economic order, largely denominated in American money, that decides
at other people shall produce, what they will be paid for their labor, how
ey live, and when they die. Reading the few commentators attempting to
rse the theory of Islamic jihad, I was reminded of the anarchist movement
late nineteenth-century Europe, and of Barbara Tuchman's chapter on the
pic in *The Proud Tower*, an aptly titled book about another age of wealth
d ease rudely awakened from its dream of moral sovereignty. Utopian in
eir thinking and certainly not crazy, the anarchist prophets, among them
lichael Bakunin, Pierre Proudhon, and Prince Peter Kropotkin, defined all
overnment (under any name, in any form) as a syn-
nym for slavery, the laws (in any form, under any
me) "cobwebs for the rich and chains of steel for the
or."[3] They sought to destroy the systems in place
he secular consumer society then known, more sim-
ly, as the bourgeoisie) with what they called "the pro-
aganda of the deed." The assassins, usually Latins or
lavs, threw their bombs at kings and opera houses
he symbolic targets of the day), and although they
ere invariably seized soon afterward by the army or
ne police, they went defiantly to death, fierce zealots
ot mindless, not faceless, not cowards) carrying
heir passion to the scaffold or the guillotine, willing
sacrifice their lives on what they called "the altar
the Idea."[4]



The nineteenth-century enemies of the Gilded
ge, like the contemporary believers in the Islamic
had, had no political program in mind, no interest
labor reform or the redistributions of wealth. On
ehalf of what they thought was revealed truth, they
ished to make an apocalyptic statement, to annihi-
ate "mankind's tormentors," whom Bakunin listed as
priests, monarchs, statesmen, soldiers, officials, fi-
anciers, capitalists, moneylenders, lawyers"—a.k.a.
ach and every member of the Council on Foreign Re-
ations, myself among them, no matter how blameless
ur individual consciences or how generous our con-
ributions to the Public Broadcasting System.

No sum of historical justification can excuse the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, but neither can we excuse our own arrogance be-
ind the screens of shock and disbelief. Enthralled by an old script, we
idn't see the planes coming because we didn't think we had to look. ■

Proudhon's excoriation of government prefigures the proclamations of the Islamic jihad as well as those of Timothy McVeigh and the Unabomber—"To be governed is to be watched, inspected, spied on, regulated, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, ruled, censored, by persons who have neither wisdom nor virtue. It is every action and transaction to be registered, stamped, taxed, patented, licensed, assessed, measured, reprimanded, corrected, frustrated. Under pretext of the public good it is to be exploited, monopolized, embezzled, robbed and then, at the least protest or word of complaint, to be fined, harassed, vilified, beaten up, bludgeoned, disarmed, judged, condemned, imprisoned, shot, garroted, deported, sold, betrayed, swindled, deceived, outraged, dishonored."

Six heads of state were assassinated in the name of anarchism in the twenty years prior to 1914. "They were President Carnot of France in 1894, Premier Canovas of Spain in 1897, Empress Elizabeth of Austria in 1898, King Humbert of Italy in 1900, President McKinley of the United States in 1901, and another Premier of Spain, Canalejas, in 1912."

The book *every* woman must see . . .

the first look



EXCERPT:

"My husband and I have been living with breast cancer for all of our married life. He says that seeing my first mammogram, which showed a tumor with spidery tendrils radiating through my breast, was far worse for him than my mastectomy scar. When I told him I was going to pose for this book he said, "You should. You're beautiful."
— Shevra

"These images are a powerful reminder of the reality of breast cancer and the beauty of courageous women.
Susan Love, M.D.

"A resource women need.
Dean S. Edell, M.D.

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ILLINOIS

WELCOME TO CANCERLAND

A mammogram leads to a cult of pink kitsch

By Barbara Ehrenreich

I was thinking of it as one of those drive-by mammograms, one stop in a series of mundane missions including post office, supermarket, and gym, but I began to lose my nerve in the changing room, and not only because of the kinky necessity of baring my breasts and affixing tiny X-ray opaque stars to the tip of each nipple. I had been in this place only four months earlier, but that visit was just part of the routine cancer surveillance all good citizens of HMOs or health plans are expected to submit to once they reach the age of fifty, and I hadn't really been paying attention then. The results of that earlier session had aroused some "concern" on the part of the radiologist and her confederate, the gynecologist, so I am back now in the role of a suspect, eager to clear my name, alert to medical missteps and unfair allegations. But the changing room, really just a closet off the stark windowless space that houses the mammogram machine, contains something far worse, I notice for the first time now – an assumption about who I am, where I am going, and what I will need when I get there. Almost all of the eye-level space has been filled with photocopied bits of cuteness and sentimentality: pink ribbons, a cartoon about a woman with iatrogenically flattened breasts, an "Ode to a Mammogram," a list of the "Top Ten Things Only Women Understand" ("Fat Clothes" and "Eyelash Curlers" among them), and, inescapably, right next to the door, the poem "I Said a Prayer for You Today," illustrated with pink roses.

It goes on and on, this mother of all mammograms, cutting into gym time, dinnertime, and lifetime generally. Sometimes the machine doesn't work, and I get squished into position to no purpose at all. More often, the X ray is successful but apparently alarming to the invisible radiologist, off in some remote office, who calls the shots and never has the courtesy to show her face with an apology or an explanation. I try pleading with the technician: I have no known risk factors, no breast cancer in the family, had my babies relatively young and nursed them both. I eat right, drink sparingly, work out, and doesn't that count for something? But she just gets this tight little professional smile on her face, either out of guilt for the torture she's inflicting or because she already knows something that I am going to be sorry to find out for myself. For an hour and a half the procedure is repeated: the squishing, the snapshot, the technician bustling off to consult the radiologist and returning with a demand for new angles and more definitive images. In the intervals while she's off with the doctor I read the *New York Times* right down to the personally irrelevant sections like theater and real estate, eschewing the stack of women's magazines provided for me, much as I ordinarily enjoy a quick read about sweatproof eyeliners and "fabulous sex tonight," because I have picked up this warning vibe in the changing room, which, in my increasingly anxious state, translates into: femininity is death. Finally there is nothing left to read but one of the free local weekly newspapers, where I find, buried deep in the classifieds, something even more unsettling than the growing prospect of major disease—a classified ad for a "breast cancer teddy bear" with a pink ribbon stitched to its chest.

Yes, atheists pray in their foxholes—in the

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a surgical one, performed on an outpatient basis but under general anesthesia, from which I awake to find him standing perpendicular to me, at the far end of the gurney, down near my feet, stating gravely, "Unfortunately, there is a cancer." It takes me all the rest of that drug-addled day to decide that the most heinous thing about that sentence is not the presence of cancer but the absence of me — for I, Barbara, do not enter into it even as a location, a geographical reference point. Where I once was — not a commanding presence perhaps but nonetheless a standard assemblage of flesh and words and gesture — "there is a cancer." I have been replaced by it, is the surgeon's implication. This is what I am now, medically speaking.

EMBODIED IN THAT TEDDY BEAR

In my last act of dignified self-assertion, I request to see the pathology slides myself. This is not difficult to arrange in our small-town hospital, where and my rusty Ph.D. in cell biology (Rockefeller low, the pathologist, who calls me "hon" and sits me down at one end of the dual-head microscope while he mans the other and moves a pointer says, showing up blue because of their overactive DNA. Most of them are arranged in stand semicircular arrays, like suburban houses squeezed into a cul-de-sac, but I also see what I know enough to know I do not want to see: the characteristic the lymphocytes and macrophages. But I am interest, by the en- lymph nodes, bone marrow,

of me, has no further chance of normal repro- duction in the postmenopausal body we share c hope for a chance to break out?

It has happened, after all; some genomes ha achieved immortality through cancer. Whe was a graduate student, I once asked about t tissue-culture cells labeled "HeLa" in heavy-doored room maintained at body temp- erature. "HeLa," it turns out, refers to one Henrie Lacks, since turned was the precursor of all He cells. She died; they live, and will go on living u til experiments tire of them or forget to ch their tissue-culture medium and leaves them starve. Maybe this is what my rebel cells have mind, and I try beaming them a solemn warni The chances of your surviving me in tissue cultu are nil. Keeping this selfish rampage and you down, every last one of you, along with the en Barbara enterprise. But what kind of a role mo el am I, or are multicellular human organisms generally, for putting the common good abo mad anarchistic individual ambition? There is reason, it occurs to me, why cancer is our metaph for so many runaway social processes, like co ruption and "moral decay": we are no less out control ourselves.

After the visit to the pathologist, my biolog cal curiosity drops to a lifetime nadir. I kno women who followed up their diagnoses wi weeks or months of self-study, mastering their o tions, interviewing doctor after doctor, assessi the damage to be expected from the availab treatments. But I can tell from a few hours of i vestigation that the career of a breast cancer p tient has been pretty well mapped out in advanc for me: You may get to negotiate the choice be tween lumpectomy and mastectomy, but lumpec tomy is commonly followed by weeks of radia tion, and in either case if the lymph nodes turn ou upon dissection, to be invaded—or "involved," a it's less threateningly put — you're doomed t chemotherapy, meaning baldness, nausea, mout sores, immunosuppression, and possible anemia These interventions do not constitute a "cure" I am willing to lose, which is why the death rate fro breast cancer has changed very little since th 1930s, when mastectomy was the only treatmen available. Chemotherapy, which became a routin part of breast cancer treatment in the eighties does not confer anywhere near as decisive an ad vantage as patients are often led to believe, espe cially in postmenopausal women like myself—a two or three percentage point difference in ten -year survival rates,[1] according to America's best

[1] *... with breast cancer at some point. The chances of her sur- ... this falls to 72 percent, and for a woman of any race whose cancer has spread to the lymph nodes, to 77.7 percent.*





caps, earrings, and bracelets; brighten up yo
home with breast-cancer candles, stained-gl
pink-ribbon candleholders, coffee mugs, pe
dants, wind chimes, and night-lights; pay your b
with special BreastChecks or a separate line
the Cure. "Awareness" bears seem
the existential space in which a friend has earne
ly advised me to "confront [my] mortality" be
a striking resemblance to the mall.

This is not, I should point out, a case of cy
cal merchants exploiting the sick. Some of t
breast-cancer tchotchkes and accessories are ma
by breast-cancer survivors themselves, such
"Janice," creator of the "Daisy Awareness Nec
lace," among other things, and in most cases a p
tion of the sales goes to breast-cancer researc
Virginia Davis of Aurora, Colorado, was inspi
to create the "Remembrance Bear" by a frien
double mastectomy and sees her work as more
a "crusade" than a business. This year she e
pects to ship 10,000 of these teddies, which
manufactured in China, and send part of t
money to the Race for the Cure. If the bears
infantilizing—as I try ever so tactfully to sugg
is how they may, in rare cases, be perceived—
far no one has complained. "I just get love letter
she tells me, "from people who say, 'God bless y
for thinking of us.'"

The ultrafeminine theme of the breast-canc
"marketplace"—the prominence, for example,
cosmetics and jewelry—could be understood a
response to the treatments' disastrous effects
one's looks. But the infantilizing trope is a lit
harder to account for, and teddy bears are not
only manifestation. A tote bag distributed
breast cancer patients by the Libby Ross Found
tion (through places such as the Columbia Pre
Medical Center) contains, among oth
items, a tube of Estée Lauder Perfumed Bo
Crème, a hot-pink satin pillowcase, an audiota
"Meditation to Help You with Chemotherapy,"
small tin of peppermint pastilles, a set of thr
small inexpensive rhinestone bracelets, a pin
striped "journal and sketch book," and—som
what jarringly—a small box of crayons. Ma
Willner, one of the founders of the Libby R
Foundation, told me that the crayons "go wi
the journal—for people to express different moo
different thoughts . . ." though she admitted she h
never tried to write with crayons herself. Possib
progression to a state of childlike d
exposing girls to the best frame of mind wi
which to endure the prolonged and toxic trea
ments. Or it may be that, in some versions of th
prevailing gender ideology, femininity is by
of arrested development. Certainly men dia

sed with prostate cancer do not receive gifts of
Matchbox cars.

But I, no less than the bear huggers, need whatever help I can get, and start wading out into the Web in search of practical tips on hair loss, mpectomy versus mastectomy, how to select a emotherapy regimen, what to wear after surgery d eat when the scent of food sucks. There is, I on find, far more than I can usefully absorb, thousands of the afflicted have posted their sto-s, beginning with the lump or bad mammo-am, proceeding through the agony of the treat-ents; pausing to mention the sustaining forces family, humor, and religion; and ending, in most all cases, with warm words of encourage-ent for the neophyte. Some of these are no ore than a paragraph long—brief waves from sis-r sufferers; others offer almost hour-by-hour gs of breast-deprived, chemotherapized lives:

> Tuesday, August 15, 2000: Well, I survived my 4th chemo. Very, very dizzy today. Very nauseated, but no barfing! It's a first. . . . I break out in a cold sweat and my heart pounds if I stay up longer than 5 minutes.

> Friday, August 18, 2000: . . . By dinner time, I was full out nauseated. I took some meds and ate a rice and vegetable bowl from Trader Joe's. It smelled and tasted awful to me, but I ate it anyway. . . . Rick brought home some Kern's nectars and I'm drinking that. Seems to have settled my stomach a little bit.

can't seem to get enough of these tales, reading n with panicky fascination about everything hat can go wrong—septicemia, ruptured im-lants, startling recurrences a few years after the ompletion of treatments, "mets" (metastases) vital organs, and—what scares me most in the hort term—"chemo-brain," or the cognitive de-erioration that sometimes accompanies hemotherapy. I compare myself with everyone, lfishly impatient with those whose conditions e less menacing, shivering over those who have ached Stage IV ("There is no Stage V," as the ain character in *Wit*, who has ovarian cancer, explains), constantly assessing my chances.

Feminism helped make the spreading breast-ancer sisterhood possible, and this realization ives me a faint feeling of belonging. Thirty years go, when the disease went hidden behind eu-hemism and prostheses, medicine was a solid atriarchy, women's bodies its passive objects of abor. The Women's Health Movement, in which was an activist in the seventies and eighties, le-itimized self-help and mutual support and en-ouraged women to network directly, sharing heir stories, questioning the doctors, banding ogether. It is hard now to recall how revolu-ionary these activities once seemed, and proba-bly few participants in breast-cancer chat rooms and message boards realize that when post-mastectomy patients first proposed meeting in support groups in the mid 1970s, the American Cancer Society responded with a firm and fatherly "no." Now no one leaves the hospital without a brochure directing her to local support groups and, at least in my case, a follow-up call from a social worker to see whether I am safely ensconced in one. This cheers me briefly, until I realize that if support groups have won the stamp of medical approval this may be because they are no longer perceived as seditious.

THE INFANTILIZING TROPE IS PERPLEXING. CERTAINLY MEN DIAGNOSED WITH PROSTATE CANCER DO NOT RECEIVE GIFTS OF MATCHBOX CARS

In fact, aside from the dilute sisterhood of the cyber (and actual) support groups, there is nothing very feminist—in an ideological or activist sense—about the mainstream of breast-cancer culture today. Let me pause to qualify: You can, if you look hard enough, find plenty of genuine, self-identified feminists within the vast pink sea of the breast-cancer crusade, women who are militantly determined to "beat the epidemic" and insistent on more user-friendly approaches to treatment. It was feminist health activists who led the campaign, in the seventies and eighties, against the most savage form of breast-cancer surgery—the Halsted radical mastectomy, which removed chest muscle and lymph nodes as well as breast tissue and left women permanently disabled. It was the Women's Health Movement that put a halt to the surgical practice, common in the seventies, of proceeding directly from biopsy to mastectomy without ever rousing the patient from anesthesia. More recently, feminist advocacy groups such as the San Francisco–based Breast Cancer Action and the Cambridge-based Women's Community Cancer Project helped blow the whistle on "high-dose chemotherapy," in which the bone marrow was removed prior to otherwise lethal doses of chemotherapy and later replaced—to no good effect, as it turned out.

Like everyone else in the breast-cancer world, the feminists want a cure, but they even more ardently demand to know the cause or causes of the disease without which we will never have any means of prevention. "Bad" genes of the inherited variety are thought to account for fewer than 10 percent of breast cancers, and only 30 percent of women diagnosed with breast cancer have any known risk factor (such as delaying childbearing or the late onset of menopause) at all. Bad lifestyle choices like a fatty diet have, after brief popular-

many. Hand World sources of the produce we eat), and the industrial runoff in our ground wa-

grants to industrialized countries quickly develop the same breast-cancer rates as those who are native born. Their emphasis on possible ecological factors, which is not shared by groups such as

the feminist breast-cancer activists in league with

BREAST CANCER WOULD HARDLY BE THE DARLING OF CORPORATE AMERICA IF ITS COMPLEXION CHANGED FROM PINK TO GREEN

other, frequently rambunctious, social movements—environmental and anticorporate.

But today theirs are discordant voices in a general chorus of sentimentality and good cheer; after all, breast cancer would hardly be the darling of corporate America if its complexion changed from pink to green. It is the very blandness of breast cancer, at least in mainstream perceptions, that makes it an attractive object of corporate charity and a way for companies to brand themselves friends of the middle-aged female market. With breast cancer, "there was no concern that you might actually turn off your audience because of the life style

Langer, director of the National Alliance of

Times in 1996. "That gives corporations a certain freedom and a certain relief in supporting

National Women's Health Network, the organizational progeny of the Women's Health

cancer provides a way of doing something for

In the mainstream of breast-cancer culture,

Mamm, for example—but more commonly grat ful: the overall tone, almost universally upbe The Breast Friends website, for example, featu a series of inspirational quotes: "Don't Cry Ov Anything that Can't Cry Over You," "I Ca Stop the Birds of Sorrow from Circling my Hea But I Can Stop Them from Building a Nest in M Hair," "When Life Hands Out Lemons, Squee Out a Smile," "Don't wait for your ship to co in . . . Swim out to meet it," and much more of th talk. Even in the relatively sophisticated *Mamm*, columnist bemoans not cancer or chemothera but the end of chemotherapy, and humorous proposes to deal with her separation anxiety pitching a tent outside her oncologist's office. S pervasive is the perkiness of the breast-canc world that unhappiness requires a kind of apol gy, as when "Lucy," whose "long term prognos is not good," starts her personal narrative breastcancertalk.org by telling us that her story not the usual one, full of sweetness and hope, b true nevertheless."

There is, I discover, no single noun to descri a woman with breast cancer. As in the AID movement, upon which breast-cancer activism partly modeled, the words "patient" and "vi tim," with their aura of self-pity and passivit have been ruled un-P.C. Instead, we get verb Those who are in the midst of their treatments described as "battling" or "fighting," sometimes i tensified with "bravely" or "fiercely"—languag suggestive of Katharine Hepburn with her face the wind. Once the treatments are over, on achieves the status of "survivor," which is how th women in my local support group identify then selves, A.A.-style, as we convene to share war st ries and rejoice in our "survivorhood": "Hi, I' Kathy and I'm a three-year survivor." For thos who cease to be survivors and join the more tha 40,000 American women who succumb to brea cancer each year—again, no noun applies. The are said to have "lost their battle" and may b memorialized by photographs carried at races f the cure—our lost, brave sisters, our fallen soldier But in the overwhelmingly Darwinian cultur that has grown up around breast cancer, martyr count for little; it is the "survivors" who merit co stant honor and acclaim. They, after all, offe living proof that expensive and painful treat ments may in some cases actually work.

Scared and medically weakened women ca hardly be expected to transform their suppor groups into bands of activists and rush out into th streets, but the equanimity of breast-cancer cul ture goes beyond mere absence of anger to wha looks, all too often, like a positive embrace o the disease. As "Mary" reports, on the Boso Buds message board:

I really believe I am a much more sensitive an

ndy Cherry, quoted in the *Washington Post*.

omen Foundation, is filled with such testimonies
the redemptive powers of the disease: "I can
nestly say I am happier now than I have ever
or me, breast cancer has provided a good kick
the rear to get me started rethinking my
e. . . ." "I have come out stronger, with a new
nse of priorities . . ." Never a complaint about
ng-term weakening of the arms caused by
ot destroy you, to paraphrase Nietzsche, makes
u a spunkier, more evolved, sort of person.

The effect of this relentless brightsiding is to
n injustice or a tragedy to rail against, but a nor-
al marker in the life cycle, like menopause or
aying hair. Everything in mainstream breast-
me and normalize the disease: the diagnosis
ay be disastrous, but there are those cunning
nk rhinestone angel pins to buy and races to
ain for. Even the heavy traffic in personal nar-
tives and practical tips, which I found so use-
l, bears an implicit acceptance of the disease and
he current barbarous approaches to its treat-
ent: you can get so busy comparing attractive
ead scarves that you forget to question a form of
eatment that temporarily renders you both bald
nd immuno-incompetent. Understood as a rite
passage, breast cancer resembles the initiation
tes so exhaustively studied by Mircea Eliade:
irst there is the selection of the initiates—by age
in the tribal situation, by mammogram or palpa-
on here. Then come the requisite ordeals—
tarification or circumcision within traditional
ultures, surgery and chemotherapy for the can-
er patient. Finally, the initiate emerges into a
ew and higher status—an adult and a warrior—

He benefits of spiritual upward mobility. You ex-
dety the inevitable disfigurements and come out,

feminine. In the lore of the disease—shared with me
by oncology nurses as well as by survivors—
chemotherapy smoothes and tightens the skin,
helps you lose weight; and, when your hair comes
perhaps a surprising new color. These may be
vailing program, opportunities for self-improve-
ment abound. The American Cancer Society of-
fers the "Look Good . . . Feel Better" program,
"dedicated to teaching women cancer patients
beauty techniques to help restore their appear-
ance and self-image during cancer treatment."
Thirty thousand women participate a year, each
nated by the Cosmetic, Toiletry, and Fragrance
struction, why not bring the other one up to speed?
Of the more than 50,000 mastectomy patients
who opt for reconstruction each year, 17 percent
go on, often at the urging of their plastic sur-
geons, to get additional surgery so that the re-
maining breast will "match" the more erect and
perhaps larger new structure on the other side.

Not everyone goes for cosmetic deceptions,
and the question of wigs versus baldness, recon-
struction versus undisguised scar, defines one of
the few real disagreements in breast-cancer cul-
ture. On the more avant-garde, upper-middle-
class side, *Mamm* magazine—which features lit-
erary critic Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick as a colum-
nist—tends to favor the "natural" look. Here,
mastectomy scars can be "sexy" and baldness
story features women who "looked upon their
baldness not just as a loss, but also as an oppor-
tunity to indulge their playful sides . . . to come
of peace signs, panthers, and tigers; another ex-
presses herself with a shocking purple wig; a third
reports that unadorned baldness makes her feel
"sensual, powerful, able to recreate myself with
every new day." But no hard feelings toward those
se to hide their castration under wigs or
ers will prefer the Ralph Lauren Pink Pony breast-
cancer motif. But everyone agrees that breast
cancer is a chance for creative self-transforma-
tion—a make-over opportunity, in fact.

Now, cheerfulness, up to and including delu-
sion and false hope, has a recognized place in

nd a diagnosis of cancer is probably capable of

told by authoritative figures that you have a dead-

ter a liminal state fraught with perils that go well beyond the disease itself. Consider the phenomenon of "voodoo death"—described by ethnographers among, for example, Australian aborigines—in which a person who has been condemned by a suitably potent curse obligingly shuts down and dies within a day or two. Cancer diagnoses could, and in some cases probably do, have the same kind of fatally dispiriting effect. So, it could be argued, the collectively pumped-up optimism of breast-cancer culture may be just what the doctor ordered. Shop for the Cure, dress in pink-ribbon regalia, organize a run or hike—whatever gets you through the night.

> IN THE BREAST CANCER CULTURE, CHEERFULNESS IS MORE OR LESS MANDATORY, DISSENT A KIND OF TREASON

But in the seamless world of breast-cancer culture, where one website links to another—from personal narratives and grassroots endeavors to the glitzy level of corporate sponsors and celebrity spokespeople—cheerfulness is more

Within this tightly knit world, attitudes are subtly adjusted, doubters gently brought back to the fold. In *The First Year of the Rest of Your Life*, for example, each personal narrative is followed by a study question or tip designed to

they are very slight hints indeed, since the collection includes no harridans, whiners, or feminist militants:

As an experiment, I post a statement on the

message board, under the subject line

rants about debilitating treatments, recalcitrant

most damningly, "sappy

receive a few words of encouragement in my fi

with the insurance company, which has tak

the position that my biopsy was a kind of

tional indulgence, but mostly a chorus of rebuk

Suzy" writes to say, "I really dislike saying y

have a bad attitude towards all of this, but you

and it's not going to help you in the least." "Ma

but more tolerant, writing, "Barb, at this t

in your life, it's so important to put all your e

ergies toward a peaceful, if not happy, existen

Cancer is a rotten thing to have happen a

there are no answers for any of us as to why. I

to live your life, whether you have one more y

or 51, in anger and bitterness is such a waste

I hope you can find some peace. You deserve

We all do. God bless you and keep you in His l

ing care. Your sister, Mary."

"Kitty," however, thinks I've gone around t

bend: "You need to run, not walk, to some cou

seling. . . . Please, get yourself some help an

ask everyone on this site to pray for you so you c

enjoy life to the fullest."

I do get some reinforcement from "Gerri," w

has been through all the treatments and n

finds herself in terminal condition: "I am a

angry. All the money that is raised, all the sm

ing faces of survivors who make it sound like i

o.k. to have breast cancer. IT IS NOT O.K

But Gerri's message, like the others on the m

sage board, is posted under the mocking headi

"What does it mean to be a brea

cancer survivor."

"Culture" is too weak a word to describe

t is. What has grown up around breast cancer

just the last fifteen years more nearly resemble

cult—or, given that it numbers more than two m

lion women, their families, and friends—perha

we should say a full-fledged religion. The pro

ucts—teddy bears, pink-ribbon brooches, and

forth—serve as amulets and talismans, comforti

the sufferer and providing visible evidence

faith. The personal narratives serve as testimo

als and follow the same general arc as the co

fessional autobiographies required of seventeent

century Puritans: first there is a crisis, oft

involving a sudden apprehension of mortal

(the diagnosis or, in the old Puritan case, a ste

word from on high); then comes a prolonged

deal (the treatment or, in the religious case, i

ternal struggle with the Devil); and finally, t

blessed certainty of salvation, or its breast-canc

equivalent, survivorhood. And like most rec

nized religions, breast cancer has its great epic

tic events, its pilgrimages and mass gatherir

where the faithful convene and draw streng

from their numbers. These are the annual races

a cure, attracting a total of about a million peo

at more than eighty sites—70,000 of them at t

largest event, in Washington, D.C., which in

ıut years has been attended by Dan and Marilyn
ıayle and Al and Tipper Gore. Everything comes
ether at the races: celebrities and corporate
ponsors are showcased; products are hawked; tal-
n's, like those of the "Swinging, Singing Sur-
ors" from Syracuse, New York, are displayed.
s at the races, too, that the elect confirm their
cial status. As one participant wrote in the
shington Post:

I have taken my "battle scarred" breasts to the Mall, donned the pink shirt, visor, pink shoelaces, etc. and walked proudly among my fellow veterans of the breast cancer war. In 1995, at the age of 44, I was diagnosed and treated for Stage II breast cancer. The experience continues to redefine my life.

Feminist breast-cancer activists, who in the
rly nineties were organizing their own mass out-
or events—demonstrations, not races—to de-
nd increased federal funding for research, tend
keep their distance from these huge, corpo-
e-sponsored, pink gatherings. Ellen Leopold,
example—a member of the Women's Com-
unity Cancer Project in Cambridge and author
A Darker Ribbon: Breast Cancer, Women, and Their Doctors in the Twentieth Century—has crit-
ized the races as an inefficient way of raising
ney. She points out that the Avon Breast Can-
r Crusade, which sponsors three-day, sixty-mile
alks, spends more than a third of the money
ised on overhead and advertising, and Komen
ay similarly fritter away up to 25 percent of its
oss. At least one corporate-charity insider agrees.
: would be much easier and more productive,"
ys Rob Wilson, an organizer of charitable races
r corporate clients, "if people, instead of running
riding, would write out a check to the charity."

To true believers, such criticisms miss the
oint, which is always, ultimately, "awareness."
hatever you do to publicize the disease—wear
pink ribbon, buy a teddy, attend a race—re-
inds other women to come forward for their
ammograms. Hence, too, they would argue, the
lt of the "survivor": If women neglect their an-
al screenings, it must be because they are afraid
at a diagnosis amounts to a death sentence.
aming survivors, proudly displaying their ath-
ic prowess, are the best possible advertisement
r routine screening mammograms, early detec-
on, and the ensuing round of treatments. Yes,
iscellaneous businesses—from tiny distributors
breast-cancer wind chimes and note cards to
ajor corporations seeking a woman-friendly im-
e—benefit in the process, not to mention the
east-cancer industry itself, the estimated $12–16
llion-a-year business in surgery, "breast health
nters," chemotherapy "infusion suites," radia-
on treatment centers, mammograms, and drugs
nging from anti-emetics (to help you survive the
usea of chemotherapy) to tamoxifen (the hor-
monal treatment for women with estrogen-sensitive tumors). But what [illegible]
Seen through pink-tinted lenses, the entire breast-cancer enterprise—from grassroots support groups and websites to the corporate providers of therapies and sponsors of races—looks like a beautiful example of synergy at work: cult activities, paraphernalia, and testimonies encourage women to undergo the diagnostic procedures, and since a fraction of these diagnoses will be positive, this means more members for the cult as well as more customers for the corporations, both those that provide medical products and services and those that offer charitable sponsorships.

But this view of a life-giving synergy is only as sound as the science of current detection and treatment modalities, and, tragically, that science is fraught with doubt, dissension, and what sometimes looks very much like denial. Routine screening mammograms, for example, are the major goal of "awareness," as when Rosie O'Donnell exhorts us to go out and "get squished." But not all breast-cancer experts are as enthusiastic. At best the evidence for the salutary effects of routine mammograms—as opposed to breast self-examination—is equivocal, with many respectable large-scale studies showing a vanishingly small impact on overall breast-cancer mortality. For one thing, there are an estimated two to four false positives for every cancer detected, leading thousands of healthy women to go through unnecessary biopsies and anxiety. And even if mammograms were





ty to a combination of surgery, chemotherapy, diation, and/or anti-estrogen drugs such as moxifen. Others, though, would have lived u treated or with surgical excision alone, eith because their cancers were slow-growing or h cause their bodies' own defenses were successf Still others will die of the disease no matter wh heroic, cell-destroying therapies are applied. T trouble is, we do not have the means to distingui between these three groups. So for many of t thousands of women who are diagnosed eac year, Plotkin notes, "the sole effect of early d tection has been to stretch out the time in whic the woman bears the knowledge of her cond tion." These women do not live longer than th might have without any medical intervention, b more of the time they do live is overshadow with the threat of death and wasted in debilit ing treatments.

To the extent that current methods of dete tion and treatment fail or fall short, America breast-cancer cult can be judged as an outbreak mass delusion, celebrating survivorhood by dow playing mortality and promoting obedience medical protocols known to have limited effic cy. And although we may imagine ourselves to h well past the era of patriarchal medicine, obed ence is the message behind the infantilizing them in breast-cancer culture, as represented by th teddy bears, the crayons, and the prevailing pink ness. You are encouraged to regress to a little-gi state, to suspend critical judgment, and to accep whatever measures the doctors, as parent surro gates, choose to impose.

Worse, by ignoring or underemphasizing th vexing issue of environmental causes, the breas cancer cult turns women into dupes of what coul be called the Cancer Industrial Complex: th multinational corporate enterprise that with th one hand doles out carcinogens and disease and with the other, offers expensive, semi-toxic pha maceutical treatments. Breast Cancer Awarene Month, for example, is sponsored by AstraZenec (the manufacturer of tamoxifen), which, until corporate reorganization in 2000, was a leadin producer of pesticides, including acetochlor, clas sified by the EPA as a "probable human carcino gen." This particularly nasty conjuncture of in terests led the environmentally oriented Cance Prevention Coalition (CPC) to condemn Breas Cancer Awareness Month as "a public relation invention by a major polluter which puts wome in the position of being unwitting allies of th very people who make them sick." Although As traZeneca no longer manufactures pesticides, CPC has continued to criticize the breast-cancer cru sade—and the American Cancer Society—for it unquestioning faith in screening mammogram and careful avoidance of environmental issues In a June 12, 2001, press release, CPC chairma

muel S. Epstein, M.D., and the well-known
sician activist Quentin Young castigated the
erican Cancer Society for its "longstanding
k record of indifference and even hostility to
cer prevention.... Recent examples include is-
ng a joint statement with the Chlorine Insti-
e justifying the continued global use of persis-
t organochlorine pesticides, and also supporting
industry in trivializing dietary pesticide residues
voidable risks of childhood cancer. ACS poli-
s are further exemplified by allocating under 0.1
cent of its $700 million annual budget to en-
onmental and occupational causes of cancer."
n the harshest judgment, the breast-cancer
t serves as an accomplice in global poison-
—normalizing cancer, prettying it up, even
presenting it, perversely, as a positive and enviable experience.

When, my three months of chemotherapy
mpleted, the oncology nurse calls to congratu-
e me on my "excellent blood work results," I
odestly demur. I didn't do anything, I tell her,
ything but endure—marking the days off on
e calendar, living on Protein Revolution canned
nilla health shakes, escaping into novels and
rk. Courtesy restrains me from mentioning the
t that the tumor markers she's tested for have
tle prognostic value, that there's no way to
ow how many rebel cells survived chemother-
y and may be carving out new colonies right
w. She insists I should be proud; I'm a survivor
w and entitled to recognition at the Relay for
e being held that very evening in town.

So I show up at the middle-school track where
e relay's going on just in time for the Survivors'
arch: about 100 people, including a few men,
ce the funds raised will go to cancer research
general, are marching around the track eight
twelve abreast while a loudspeaker announces
eir names and survival times and a thin line of
servers, mostly people staffing the raffle and
od booths, applauds. It could be almost any
nd of festivity, except for the distinctive stacks
cellophane-wrapped pink Hope Bears for sale
some of the booths. I cannot help but like the
nky small-town *Gemütlichkeit* of the event, es-
cially when the audio system strikes up that uni-
rsal anthem of solidarity, "We Are Family,"
d a few people of various ages start twisting to
e music on the gerry-rigged stage. But the mon-
raised is going far away, to the American Can-
r Society, which will not be asking us for our
vice on how to spend it.

I approach a woman I know from other settings,
ne of our local intellectuals, as it happens, decked
t here in a pink-and-yellow survivor T-shirt and
ith an American Cancer Society "survivor
edal" suspended on a purple ribbon around her
ck. "When do you date your survivorship from?"
I ask her, since the announced time, five and a half years, seems longer than I recall. "From diagnosis or the completion of your treatments?" The question seems to annoy or confuse her, so I do not press on to what I really want to ask: At what point, in a downwardly sloping breast-cancer career, does one put aside one's survivor regalia and admit to being in fact a die-er? For the dead are with us even here, though in much diminished form. A series of paper bags, each about the right size for a junior burger and fries, lines the track. On them are the names of the dead, and inside each is a candle that will be lit later, after dark, when the actual relay race begins.

THE CULT TURNS WOMEN INTO DUPES OF CORPORATIONS THAT PRODUCE CARCINOGENS AND THEN OFFER TOXIC PHARMACEUTICAL TREATMENTS

My friend introduces me to a knot of other women in survivor gear, breast-cancer victims all, I learn, though of course I would not use the V-word here. "Does anyone else have trouble with the term 'survivor'?" I ask, and, surprisingly, two or three speak up. It could be "unlucky," one tells me; it "tempts fate," says another, shuddering slightly. After all, the cancer can recur at any time, either in the breast or in some more strategic site. No one brings up my own objection to the term, though: that the mindless triumphalism of "survivorhood" denigrates the dead and the dying. Did we who live "fight" harder than those who've died? Can we claim to be "braver," better, people than the dead? And why is there no room in this cult for some gracious acceptance of death, when the time comes, which it surely will, through cancer or some other misfortune?

No, this is not my sisterhood. For me at least, breast cancer will never be a source of identity or pride. As my dying correspondent Gerri wrote: "IT IS NOT O.K.!" What it is, along with cancer generally or any slow and painful way of dying, is an abomination, and, to the extent that it's man-made, also a crime. This is the one great truth that I bring out of the breast-cancer experience, which did not, I can now report, make me prettier or stronger, more feminine or spiritual—only more deeply angry. What sustained me through the "treatments" is a purifying rage, a resolve, framed in the sleepless nights of chemotherapy, to see the last polluter, along with, say, the last smug health-insurance operative, strangled with the last pink ribbon. Cancer or no cancer, I will not live that long of course. But I know this much right now for sure: I will not go into that last good night with a teddy bear tucked under my arm. ■

HOU

A progressive paradise m

[illegible] begets money. For proof, one need only con- [illegible] New York, whose residents since 1991 have been [illegible] their own currency, "Ithaca Hours," which is accepted [illegible] Tompkins County. The currency's [illegible] and the local [illegible] and the national and global currents that have, in the last cen- [illegible] America's cities and towns [illegible] elsewhere in the U.S. — most in progressive towns like Ithaca, [illegible] Hours are designed to com- bat a reliance on dollars, which, in the words of Hours' founder, Paul Glover, "make us increasingly dependent on transnational [illegible] but it the intent is toward ending [illegible] with the old liberation, admitting one's [illegible]

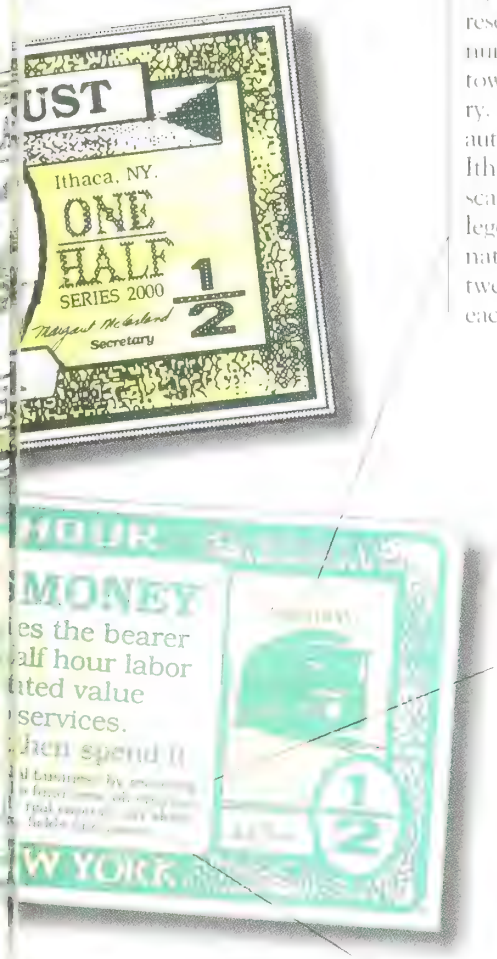


Glover's anticorporate views are reflected in his currency's notes, which, in high socialist style, have been denominated in hours of labor — the largest note is Two Hours, the smallest an Eighth Hour. (Glover was inspired by the nineteenth-century Welsh reformer Robert Owen, who imagined "labour notes" that workers could trade to build up capital.) Despite such [illegible] Hour is uniformly worth $10, Glover's estimate of the county's average hourly wage. Laborers and professionals who accept Hours in payment may value their time however they wish, and retailers can simply divide dollar prices by ten to compute prices in Hours. Few Ithaca businesses will conduct a transaction entirely in Hours, but more than 500 welcome them for at least partial payment. Such merchants include a hospital, a movie theater, a credit union, and two major grocery stores, as well as a ballet [illegible] seven acupuncturists, and twenty-two masseuses.

Ithaca Hours display all the trappings of authority, both in their design — complete with signatures, serial numbers, and watermarks — and in their administration. They enjoy legal protection against counterfeit, and their independent board, which includes a former assistant economist for the Federal Reserve, functions as Ithaca's own Fed, monitoring and ad- [illegible] the supply of Hours in circulation. Merchants receive [illegible] newly issued Hours when they agree to accept the curren- [illegible] more every eight months. The board also offers [illegible] Hours from [illegible] a participating business. Since 1991, [illegible] $25,000 in Hours has been issued, and total [illegible] million

WN

noney, *by Mark Wallace*



Local currencies were the norm in America until 1862, when, with the first issuance of "United States notes," all remaining nonfederal currencies were taxed out of circulation. These historical etchings are intended, perhaps, to whisk the spender back to that era, when Ithaca was known as much for its industry as for its fledgling university. In 1887—when this trolley represented a leap forward in mass transit—the Cornell workforce numbered 114, fewer than that of the Ithaca Glass Works, the town also housed a gun works, a paint works, and a clock factory. Today, Cornell's staff, at around 9,000, is five times that of auto-parts maker BorgWarner, Ithaca's second-largest employer. Ithaca College is a close third, followed by a hospital and an upscale supermarket chain, both of which cater largely to the colleges' staff and students. In April the "trolley" returned—as a natural-gas-burning bus in trolley's clothing that shuttles between Cornell and the downtown shops from 10 A.M. to 2 P.M. each day, a quaint conveyance to off-campus lunch dates.

Hours' aim is "recycling our wealth locally"—or, more bluntly put, protectionism, in a county that, with 1.8 percent unemployment, has much to protect—and their enemy, as in other boutique communities, is national chain stores. The Ithaca Commons, the downtown's pedestrian mall, is already free of these stores, the last (a CVS pharmacy) having vacated in May. Ithaca's mayor boasts of the mall's 93 percent occupancy rate; but most towns, lacking Ithaca's prosperous pedestrian traffic, could ill afford to adopt the Commons' auto-unfriendly design, which the national chains distrust. Other towns have found less elegant defenses. Santa Cruz, California, has decreed that new large retail stores must maintain the city's "balance of local [and] non-local businesses," while the resort town of Port Jefferson, New York, has banned fast-food restaurants from its historic downtown. Even when banished, the chains are undaunted—they merely creep off into the strip malls that surround these downtowns, as if to outflank an unwitting foe.

Whether through legislation or through local currencies, such economic puritanism can be commendable, even beneficial. But in practice, it is yet another of the luxuries enjoyed by university towns, tourist traps, or suburban hideaways—towns whose access to U.S. dollars is hardly in danger. In building the Hour economy, Ithaca's modern-day tradespeople have relied on the "real capital" enumerated here ("our skills, our time, our tools, forests, fields, and rivers"), but in doing so they have overlooked the ocean on which their town is afloat, a sea of affluence fed by Ithaca's universities, their alumni and parents, and the "transnational corporations" that fund their research programs. Thus is this money, too, begotten of the nonlocal kind.

Wallace is a freelance journalist in New York City

THE APPRAISAL

A company town gives its farmers the business

By John Hildebrand

In 1931, a year after *American Gothic* and outbuildings leads into two figures in the foreground: one is a farm woman, the other is her city counterpart, and *Appraisal* in a competition at the Iowa tree tall, around the corner lay sheriff's sales, penny auctions, and martial the stink of livestock barns into the art pavilion and see the city represented as a tart lady. Distrust between city and

epting a firm grip on the chicken, she manages the thinnest of smiles for her sneering glance is wary a hint of mirth, a visitor were one more in a long line of scheming two-faced sharpies.

In October 1998, Kathy King was combining a ten-acre soybean field above her farmhouse in southeastern Minnesota. Even from a distance, anyone could tell who was at the helm of the John Deere 9400: "Kathy" was painted in yellow on the side, because, as her husband, Terry, likes to point out, the combine cab is much as a yacht. From its elevated cab, Kathy could look out on four townships: Seccond her husband, Terry, and the King others. It was a bird's-eye perspective on a landscape of almost pure geometric proportions, a landscape redrawn by machines every autumn as the bare rectangles and the countryside resembles nothing so much as a plat map of itself. But Kathy's gaze was fo- of soybeans. Her eyes, blue and alert behind steel-rim glasses, worked overtime looking for chunks of limestone that can float to the surface from one

Kathy had learned to combine on this very field twenty years earlier under conditions of some urgency. That harvest season had begun in a cold rain. After four rounds, Terry had parked the combine to cut firewood in the woodlot below the house. Kathy was the kitchen when she heard their o est boy, then eleven, gun the small u ity tractor into the yard. She was ab to reprimand him for hot-rodding wh the boy ran inside and sobbed th there'd been an accident. A big e had bucked backward and caught T ry in the chest. Both the ambular and sheriff's deputy who arrived h to be towed out of the mud by trac before Terry could be taken the t miles to Saint Marys Hospital Rochester. While he recuperated, w broken ribs and a bruised heart, wife resumed the harvest. Althou she'd grown up on a farm, Kathy h never driven anything as big as t 9400's predecessor. The ten-acre fie was still greasy from the rains wh she began, but she managed to ke the combine erect and moving. Sh did not realize, amid the muffled pi of beans filling the hopper, that a b had fallen into the reel until the enti header collapsed, sickle blades flyin and the combine lurched to a halt. local implement dealer lent her a ne header, and a neighbor in his seventi volunteered to help while his wife b by-sat the King children. He'd sho up about nine in the morning, and t gether they would grease up machine and shuttle grain wagons until the de was off, then combine long into th night, walking back to the farmhous in its circle of arc light and the pi rades in the darkness beyond that co stituted their neighborhood.

This October the weather was hol ing dry, the harvest on schedule, whe Kathy got a phone call at lunch fro her neighbor Bill Kunsle. From he

r window she could see the Kuisles'
across the valley on Yankee Ridge.
Are you sitting down, Kathy?"
"Yes." She laughed and waited for
other shoe to drop.
"Did you know you're getting a rail-
d?"

uisle, a state
esentative, sat
the steering
mmittee of a
county task
e studying a
posal by the
kota, Minneso-
Eastern Rail-
to upgrade its
k through Ro-
ester. The up-
de was a small
t of a $1.5 bil-
n project to ex-
d the rail line
o Wyoming's
vder River Ba-
from its eastern
minus on the
ssissippi River.
e DM&E ex-
nsion, the large-
railroad project
posed in a cen-
y, would carry
w-sulfur coal to
tern utilities facing more stringent
a-quality controls. The steering com-
tee, however, was considering mov-
g the railroad out of Rochester and
o the countryside. Kuisle had seen
map of the proposed bypass. The
cks would bisect the King farm just
ove the house, taking out a new pole
d and five grain bins, and exit-
ing through the ten-acre
field.



Two landmarks dominate the sky-
e of Rochester, Minnesota. One is
fourteen-story brick-and-terra-cot-
Plummer Building, flagship of the
rld-famous Mayo Clinic; the other
the old Libby canning plant's green-
d-yellow water tower, shaped like a
nt ear of corn. Together they repre-
nt the city's past and future. So many
ks and schools and public buildings
named after the Mayo brothers,
s. Will and Charlie, that the two
uld be mistaken for Rochester's
thic twins, their origins intertwined
with the city's own. The town was
founded on wheat, but sick people
made it rich. Today, Rochester is a city
of hotel rooms and florist shops and a
shifting population of "visitors," some
dressed strangely for the Midwest in
kaffiyehs and flowing robes, some with
entourages and bodyguards—all of
them pilgrims of a sort. Ranking
Rochester at the top of its list of Best
Small Cities in America, *Money*
magazine noted that it possessed "the
sophistication of a larger metro area, but
not the congestion or the complica-
tions." There are several art galleries,
good restaurants and a repertory the-
ater." But when one overhears the visi-
tors in the good restaurants, the talk is
pointedly not of art galleries or reper-
tory theater but of invasive procedures
and long-term prognoses, and the "con-
gestion" and "complications" to be
avoided are chiefly the result of sec-
ondary infection. So merged is the
town's identity with its largest employer
that the 1.5 million visitors cited by
the Chamber of Commerce is exactly
equal to the number of outpatient vis-
its to the Clinic. In a literal sense, the
Mayo Clinic *is* downtown Rochester,
now occupying 10 million square feet
(two and a half times the floor space of
the Mall of America). And if the Clinic
[illegible] did the city, which
too well the [illegible]
tors—its flower shop
"unexpected" sophistic[illegible]
to imagine Rochester [illegible]
would be to imagine another
middling prairie
town, one more
hicksville with a wa-
ter tower shaped like
a giant ear
of corn.

A week after
Bill Kuisle's phone
call to Kathy King,
six hundred mostly
rural residents of
Olmsted County
crowded into the
Mayo Civic Center
in a bad mood. They
were angry because
they'd received a let-
ter from Kuisle in-
forming them that
the steering commit-
tee was about to issue
a final recommenda-
tion regarding a by-
pass through their
land. I was there be-
cause my in-laws had
received one of those letters. Our col-
lective mood worsened as we read an
addendum to the task force's agenda:
"NOTE TO INTERESTED CIT-
ZENS—There will be NO public hear-
ing this evening."

"We would like to caution every-
one from making assumptions or jump-
ing to conclusions regarding any of the
options recommended as solutions,"
said cochair Dave Bishop, a state leg-
islator from Rochester and owner of
Bishop Properties.

"This divisive issue is not caused
by any of the citizens of Olmsted
County nor by any of our local gov-
ernment units," the white-haired
Bishop continued. His cranky de-
meanor and orotund delivery suggest-
ed Lionel Barrymore giving the
riffraff of Bedford Falls a good
tongue-lashing. "It is caused by a pro-
posal from a railroad that wishes to
profit by shipping a commodity, coal,
through our County. . . . If you are
concerned about the trains, lay that

that coal trains were not welcome in Rochester. Nobody mentioned that the only coal currently hauled by the DM&E Railroad supplies Rochester

The floor was soon given over to a short, balding consultant with the heroic name of Leif Thorson. Thor-

by the task force to study the DM&E's

Rochester as well as alternatives, including a rural bypass.

"Now we're going to look at the De-

jecting an overhead transparency divided into multiple columns. "A matrix is a list of issues and options. It's a vehicle for comparing, if you will."

tunnel[ling] a trench through the city, a tunnel . . . and the consultant whittled away at these until only two remained that weren't, in his words, "fatally flawed": DM&E's proposal to upgrade

the city's plan to build a thirty-six-mile bypass south through the coun-

where from $100 to $300 million. Thorson compared the bypass not with the railroad's own proposed upgrade version prepared by his firm: although the DM&E proposal displaced no homes or businesses (since it uses the existing trackbed), the "enhanced" version uprooted fourteen businesses and sixty-nine homes, nearly doubling the cost. Thorson worked the opposite magic with the bypass, shrinking its costs by, essentially, making the rural population disappear.

"Displacement of households," said Thorson, moving his finger along the matrix's bypass column, "ten to fifteen. Displacement of businesses . . . none."

"What about farms?" a voice shouted. "Isn't a farm a business?"

"Well," said the consultant, perplexed by the question, "we didn't consider farms as businesses."

Hoots and catcalls.

The bypass route traversed fifty-odd farms, and even if trains didn't smash through the farmhouse the result was likely to be the same. Yet this point was difficult to get across, because the audience wasn't allowed to address the meeting except to ask questions. Here are the questions I should have asked: If a farm isn't a business, then what is it? And if you divert a railroad through a farm so that the farmer cannot get to his crops and his livestock cannot get to pasture or water, don't you put him out of business? And if you put him out of business, don't you also put

But I sat on my hands.

"Minnesota Nice" is a phrase often invoked by state politicians when doling out bad news. The polite silence that follows isn't modesty or reserve but a variety of fatalism, the self-defeating conviction that you're going to get screwed anyway so you might as well take it quietly instead of making a public spectacle of yourself. It is part of a rural ethos, an ethos in which language, or an excess of language, is always suspect, the sure sign of a bullshitter. It explains, in part, why American farmers are so reluctant to protest even as they're relentlessly edged out of the market, preferring to go down quietly with the ship, one [illegible] at a time.

Someone asked Thorson why [illegible] Decision Matrix had no figures or [illegible] ral road closings or resulting delay[illegible] emergency-response time in the co[illegible] try, where it always takes longer for [illegible] ambulance to arrive. The consul[illegible] did not have an answer. He scan[illegible] the crowd, looking for a friendly f[illegible] someone in a coat and tie, some[illegible] like me. "Okay," he said affably. "I [illegible] anyone have figures on rural roa[illegible]

"Shouldn't you?" I vel[illegible]

"You're the consultant!"

On October 8, 1864, t[illegible] *Rochester City Post* carried the [illegible] lowing editorial:

> Jubilate! Jubilate! . . . That is what ev[illegible] body and his wife exulted on hea[illegible] last week for the first time in Roche[illegible] the whistle of the locomotive . . . bless[illegible] stars that we live in the days of R[illegible] roads, and that it is our good fortun[illegible] dwell in a section of country traver[illegible] thereby. . . . [A]ll hail to the welco[illegible] blasts of the shrill whistles which br[illegible] from the iron throats of monster lo[illegible] motives!

Railroads were the arbiters of d[illegible] tiny in nineteenth-century Ameri[illegible] vanquishing both time and spac[illegible] and their arrival secured Rocheste[illegible] future. Farmers had a more comp[illegible] cated relationship with the railroa[illegible] In the 1870s, when the railroad do[illegible] bled its freight rates, a vocal cri[illegible] was Rochester's horse-and-bug [illegible] practitioner, Dr. William Worr[illegible] Mayo. A farmer by preference, [illegible] was elected to the state legislature [illegible] the populist Farmer's Alliance ticke[illegible] "If I could treat this railroad comp[illegible] ny in my profession," he declared, [illegible] would give them such a puke [illegible] would bring their corns from the [illegible] toes through their stomachs." H[illegible] sons, Doctors Will and Charlie, hov[illegible] ever, recognized the railroad's impo[illegible] tance to the growth of their smal[illegible] town clinic, and by the 1930s a [illegible] express train equipped with speci[illegible] cars transported patients from Chic[illegible] go to Rochester. By then the railroa[illegible] was no longer the big do[illegible] in town: the Clinic was.

The day after Christmas, my fathe[illegible] in-law received a letter from Rocheste[illegible]

...or Chuck Canfield. Although his ...diction does not extend to my fam... ...land in Marion Township, the ...or had assumed responsibility for ...rming my in-laws that their farm lay ...nm 1,200 feet of a potential rail... ...l corridor (in fact, the bypass would ...the place in half) as well as detail... ...the means by which their land ...ld be taken. "This would require ...appraisal of the property to deter... ...ne the value, with an opportunity ...a separate appraisal by the proper... ...owner. These appraisals form the ...is for a negotiated settlement."

But how is my father-in-law to ap...ise the farm he grew up on, that be...ged to his father and grandfather, a ...e he never left except to fly P-38s ...he Pacific? This corner of Marion ...nship was settled by Irish immi...nts, many of whom came west with ...railroad and settled on quarter-sec...ns of rolling upland that reminded ...m of County Wexford or Cork. The ...narries on the current township ...t—Sheehan, Touhey, Griffin, ...Neill—are those inscribed in the ...cet windows of St. Bridget's Church ...d on the white headstones in the ...oining cemetery. My in-laws were ...ng asked to give up not just acreage ...their stake in a neighborhood old... ...and more tightly woven than any ...n-shaded cul-de-sac in Rochester.

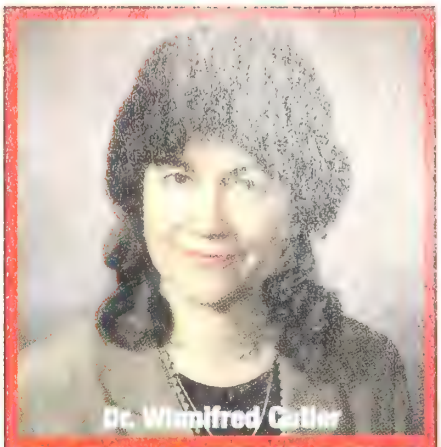
A memo attached to the mayor's ...ter reminded my in-laws of the ...vn's big dog. "Finally, the main foun...ion for the employment base for the ...ty of Rochester and for this entire ...a is based on the services provided ...the Mayo Clinic and their ability to ...npete with health care providers in ...ality communities throughout the ...te, the United States, and interna...nally. There are alternative loca...ns for health care that could be cho...n by a percentage of the Mayo Clinic ...tients. We want to ensure that they continue to choose Rochester."

...n Minnesota, rural schoolhouses ...at haven't been torn down or con...rted to grain bins enjoy a second life ...township halls. The township is the ...-mile square division that served as ...homas Jefferson's blueprint for an ...grarian republic, a vision that never ...ite got off the drawing board, its ves...tigial outlines still visible in rule... straight roads that run in cardinal directions, spaced exactly a mile apart. Although township government survives in the Midwest and New England, its political powers were largely absorbed by the county after reapportionment in the 1960s, which based representation on population size. In rural areas, like most of Olmsted County, overshadowed by a single midsize city, the township remains the most intimate form of government. Apart from maintaining roads and levying property taxes, the township provides a sounding board that, in De Tocqueville's words, can still "excite the warmest of human affections without arousing the ambitious passions of the heart of man."

Salem Town Hall, a prairie-style former schoolhouse, stands at a crossroads opposite a trailer park and the Hiawatha Valley Farm Store. On a cold evening in December, my brother-in-law, Steve Raduenz, and I left his car parked beside a snowbank and hurried inside, where it was warmer but not much. People stood around in coats and hats until someone adjusted the thermostat and the heat kicked in. A pennant on the wall read "Salem Sailors 4-H Club—Helping Kids Sail into the 21st Century." But everything about the place seemed stuck in the past: the cream-colored wainscoting and old wooden floor, the optimistic 4-H banners, even the audience, some of whom must have attended school here.

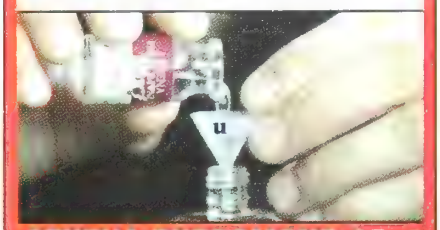
Dressed in a loden blazer and gray turtleneck, Kathy King looked like the schoolteacher she used to be. "We are waiting," she said, "for the lawyer to arrive." In short order, she brought us up to speed on the newly formed Citizens Against the Bypass. In the three weeks since the task force meeting in Rochester, the group had collected hundreds of names on a petition, written the county's eighteen townships as well as state and federal legislators, and invited an attorney (en route) to explain our situation. In almost every instance, she'd found the Mayo Clinic about eight months ahead in terms of lining up political support.

The lawyer, a large-boned woman in owlish glasses, arrived in a cloud of frost. She had spent the afternoon arguing a right-of-way case on the oth-



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would mean a long uphill battle with
in hour with a retainer of $5,000.
Should we go ahead?"

The vote was unanimous.

nylon jacket brought back two Cokes from the store across the street and presented one to the attor-

On the night of a public forum on the bypass, Kathy King went to the barn to feed her horses. She planned to finish chores, then drive to the Mayo Civic Center in time for the forum. But as she doled out hay and oats, she noticed that one of the horses, a twenty-year-old bay, was strangely agitated, kicking the stall and grinding its teeth. Caught between the demands of civics and animal husbandry, she called the vet. After he tubed the sick horse — squeezing mineral oil and antibiotics down its throat — Kathy spent the evening walking the horse around until its breathing seemed normal. She on the ten o'clock news. What she saw was me, barking at a television reporter and looking strangely agitated.

Instead of the promised open forum, the steering committee had substituted a consensus-building format called the Chadwick Process. The audience vided into small "consensus verseen by a trained "facili- der uniform headings private by the In short, the nd of War- the argu- ored, for your cows from their water source, the caused the uproar.

"Remember," said Paul Wilson, cochair of the steering committee and head designer for Whiting's Flowers and Greenhouse. "To participate in the small-group process, you must be seated."

Shouting over Wilson, I insisted that we'd been promised a public forum, and this surely wasn't it. As a compromise, the task force allowed two minutes of open microphone at the end. About twenty people took their turn, and none of them raised their voice. Most complained that the makeup of the steering committee unfairly favored the city. The last to speak was my father-in-law's veterinarian, Doc Predmore, a laconic man I've never seen in anything but faded overalls and a field cap with a Special Forces pin in the crown. Tonight was no exception.

"What about it, Paul? Could we get more rural representation on the steering committee?"

Wilson, a florist in a spot, said he'd look into it.

A few weeks later, Wilson called Kathy King to ask if she'd join the steering committee. At the first meeting, the county attorney waxed eloquent on his recent trip to the western part of the DM&E's proposed expansion, and lamented the damage the railroad would inflict on the hard-working ranchers and "pristine landscape" there. When Kathy pointed out that a bypass around Rochester threatened farmland every bit as beautiful as ranches in the colorful West, the attorney looked at the table. Nobody said anything.

Clearly, the bypass was apparently making an impact. A Mayo document titled "DM&E Railroad Communications Strategy" acknowledged that "the public comment period comes at a time when bypass opponents have mobilized public opinion in their favor . . ." and outlined steps to reverse this setback, the bypass is public communication, instead focus energy on the damaging effects of the proposal . . ."

"Mobilize business and civic lead and public opinion, encouraging th to contact their federal elected cials or members of the Surface Tr portation Board."

The memo described the propo upgrade through Rochester as a thr on the order of a nuclear disaster. much of the perceived threat wa the Clinic's own financial well-bei

"Any modest decrease in pati volumes would have a significant n ative impact on Mayo's financ performance. Thus any deteriorat in our environment that causes tients not to come to Rochest threatens both Mayo's and the regi economy."

More to the point, Dr. Michael M ray, chairman of Mayo's public aff committee, told the local newspa that "increased rail traffic . . . could s or halt clinic growth."

It's absurd to think of ailing sheik or anyone, choosing health care on basis of train traffic. Patients come Rochester because Mayo is a br name, with a product recognition b in part on the Clinic's marketing o bucolic setting. Ironically, a byp would destroy exactly those envir that make Rochester such a "pleasa clean, peaceful community." For thing, the rural townships provide Clinic with a steady source of in pensive and reliably "nice" work And who's to say that a patient fac the next round of chemo wouldn't p fer to contemplate cornfields a pastures rather than his c ticking clock?

The death of the family farm is longest-running melodrama in the tion's repertoire, its first act begun ter the Civil War, when the numbe Americans living on farms first fell low the number who didn't. Toc fewer than 2 percent live on farms the last decade alone, the numbe farmers in Minnesota and Iowa declined by 25 percent. And when last one goes, why should we ca There's not much chance we'll go h gry, and the "farmer" will endure an advertising icon, a plaid-shir geezer who needs a jolt of coffee t bowl of high-fiber cereal before mo ing an antique tractor and thunder into the sunrise. In the end, what w

· lost will be those last reminders
· ho we once were as a nation
and sometimes still pretend
to be.

By early summer the rolling crop-
l of Olmsted County makes you
der if Grant Wood wasn't a photo-
ist instead of a painter whose
umy farmscapes seem pumped with
ogen. His landscapes are always
inine, not hilly fields but breasts
buttocks in which the farmer sinks
plow. The subtext is not sex but fe-
dity. The earth yields up her boun-
eason after season, asking nothing
eturn but the best years of your life.
'd come down to help my father-in-
separate his calves, so he could in-
late them and castrate the young
ls. But when I arrived, the separat-
was over, the calves bunched in a
ll corral beside the barn and a fence
ind which the cows kept up a ter-
e bawling. The ones with yellow
stic ear tags belonged to a cousin,
nnis O'Neill, who'd been renting
cropland and soon would take over
of the pasture. At seventy-nine, my
er-in-law was calling it quits after
s year—his last roundup, as it were.
Dennis did the vaccinating while
two teenage sons brought calves
from the small corral one at a time
into the squeeze chute. The first
f was a small brown heifer with long-
hed rabbit eyes. Once the calf was
mobilized in a head clamp, Dennis
ot a pistol-grip syringe into its neck
d released the clamp.

'Watch this one," my father-in-law
d. "He's frisky."

The bull calf promptly kicked Den-
in the leg. Hobbling after the calf
o the chute, Dennis inoculated him,
n knelt down and used a spreader to
o two small rubber bands over the
f's balls that would cause the testes
eventually atrophy and fall off. Re-
ised, the newly made steer stepped
gerly into the cow yard, uncertain
the damage done.

Nobody mentioned the railroad by-
ss, though just by looking up we
uld see where it would go, just east of
e barn, on the level cropland, cutting
farm in half. There were more im-
ediate problems at hand. Dennis had
t bailed out of the hog business after
e market dropped to eleven cents a
pound, not enough to cover feed costs,
let alone labor, which in Dennis's case
included the efforts of his sons. Sean,
the youngest, was all smirk and wise-
crack to his older brother's gravitas.
Dennis rode them equally hard.

"Get off your ass, boys, and see if
you can't do two things at once!"

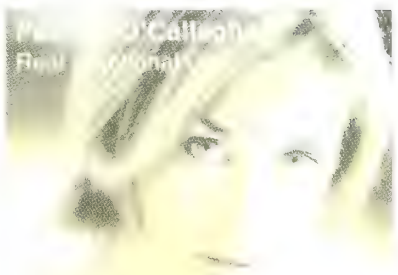
Pat, seventeen, looked like every
teacher's nightmare: Marine haircut,
cutoff T-shirt, engineer boots, Harley-
Davidson cap – except that he carried
himself with more dignity than any
teenager I know and was certainly
harder working. He'd spent the sum-
mer driving heavy machinery for a
construction company but planned to
farm like his father. I didn't know
whether to admire his determination
or run the kid through the squeeze
chute and beat some sense
into him.

For an entire week, the *Rochester Post-Bulletin* donated full-page ads out-
lining the horrors of coal trains. The
city was about to be pillaged by the
Dakota, Minnesota & Eastern Rail-
road and its ruthless CEO, Kevin
Schieffer, the reincarnation of every
empire-building robber baron since
railroad magnate James J. Hill.

"This Schieffer is not a nice guy," a
baggy-pants environmentalist told an
audience at Episcopal Church on the
city's north side. "This guy is thinking
of lining his own pockets. Money!
Money! Money!" The speaker
whapped the screen with a stick when-
ever Schieffer's grinning face appeared.
"Is he going to stop for a wheelchair on
the tracks? No! So who's in favor of the
railroad? Schieffer, Schieffer, and
Schieffer. Money! Money! Money!"

When Kathy King invited Schieffer
to a question-and-answer session at an
American Legion hall south of
Rochester, the railroad baron agreed.
At forty-two, he looked fit and boyish
in an open-neck sport shirt and match-
ing slacks. Describing himself as "a re-
covering attorney," he told the rural
crowd what they most wanted to hear.

"We have no interest in building a
bypass around Rochester. I think
there's no need to build a bypass
around Rochester. Before you even get
into the cost issues or engineering fea-
sibility issues or the operational issues
or the safety issues or anything else,



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mental question is this: will

sections of track were so old that trains

hour, and even then averaged half a

derailed while standing still when the century-old track buckled beneath it.

bentonite clay from western South Dakota, kaolin clay from Minnesota, forest products out of the Black Hills, and cement from Rapid City, as well as grain, which makes up 40 percent of its business. But Schieffer was pinning

year, the federal Clean Air Act re-

coal such as the low-sulfur coal mined in Wyoming's Powder River Basin. By

Wyoming, DM&E could cut 30 per-

ern Santa Fe, now travel to haul the low-sulfur coal to utilities in the central Midwest and Ohio River Valley. It was a project, Schieffer liked to say, that made too much sense not to build.

"We go through fifty-seven communities and I'm sure that twenty-seven of them are supportive. There is one community on this line that is opposed to the project. And we've been pretty

tion table with that kind of approach, because from our perspective a

that works."

( )

meeting to discuss a possible agreement. My brother-in-law, Steve, and early enough to help our-

but I could

help

everyone talked about the weather.

ing arrangements resembled a map of

the wall. Mayor Canfield and city

representatives close at hand.

I

my hand, sticky from a caramel bismarck.

the mural. I saw nothing close up,

something tumbled in the jowly, eager face. It was a buyer's face, beaming with acquisitiveness, the

the city woman in Wood's painting. The mayor looked ready to shop, eager to shower Schieffer with millions of taxpayers' dollars if only he'd build a bypass around Rochester.

Schieffer, at one end of the table, flanked by city attorneys, began by explaining his conditions for building a bypass. First, the city would have to pay most of the $75 to $200 million cost. Second, it would have to file its own federal application. And third, landowners along the route would have to be brought into the negotiations. In short, if the city did the dirty work to build its own bypass, Schieffer would run his trains on it.

"Kevin," said a city attorney, "when you started out, you said that the emphasis of your agreement was to make the existing railroad a better line. . . . In your letter to Mayor Canfield says, 'If the only value Rochester sees in this agreement is an immediate bypass, then we are all probably wasting our time.' We haven't gotten past that point yet, have we?"

Schieffer hunched over the microphone. "Maybe the word 'immediate' is the, uh, operative word." But as he continued, Schieffer spoke more rapidly and with less patience.

"We want to run our railroad. We have a right, I think, to run our property like responsible businesses and do very responsible approach to our neighbors. That's what this agreement is about. I don't think we have to go out and tell someone else, 'We want to build a bypass for development our own property because somebody thinks there might be a problem in the city.' If there's a problem in the city, then there's an opportunity for you to build. But before we establish that there is a problem, it's pretty h for me to walk up to somebody's d and say, 'Hi. I'm from the railroad we're going to take your land.' I've to do that out West, and it's not fu

The attorney frowned into his yel pad. Then a councilman asked w Schieffer insisted that any agreem the railroad entered into with the be co-signed by the Mayo Clinic.

"One thing that's become very parent to me," Schieffer replied, that if Mayo wants an agreement, w have an agreement."

Some of us along the wall laugh And a curious thing happened. T laughter spread from the spectator the table itself, from the city-cour members to the otherwise dour-fa Mayo reps, until we were all guffa ing, everybody enjoying a good la at the boss's expense. The only o not laughing was Kevin Schieffer, w seemed uncertain if he'd misspok not recognizing how awf ly funny the obvious can

A few months before the Surf Transportation Board arrived Rochester to hold public hearings the DM&E proposal, a new "citizen-coalition" emerged with the task "generating a grassroots swell of prote against the railroad. The foundi board of Citizens to Stop the C Trains was largely composed of Ma administrators and business leade some of whom had previously served the steering committee. But in this n role, they did not "reference the b pass in public communication," insi ing instead that they opposed the e tire project. As an issue, the bypass h not generated much enthusiasm fr exactly those city residents it was mea to save, possibly because "increas noise" and "vibrations" are lower the emotional scale than losing on family farm, and possibly because ci residents felt ashamed to push the problem onto others. Eliminating t bypass from public discussion obviat that guilt and also made it possible f the group to receive $25,000 in in-kin support from the county board, whic had adopted a "no-build" position. B the group's cover letter to the ST only opposed the upgrade throug Rochester. Later, the group's cocha explained that he was not necessari

...inst the DM&E project, just the ...route. "We have to have access to ...gy. I realize that," he said.

...November, the SEB held its hear... ...at the Mayo Civic Center. Kathy K...g's group, now called Citizens ...ainst Rochester's Bypass, carried fl...s printed with the coiled snake and ...to of an earlier republic, "Don't ...ad on Me." Their counterparts were st...-sign buttons and Styrofoam hats th...t looked as if they'd been borrowed fr...n the Bush campaign. One could ...help being touched by the city g...up's innocence as they stepped one b...one to the microphone to say that t...y did not want coal trains but nei...r did they want to force a bypass on th...ir rural neighbors. It was this group, ...ner than the farmers, who made the ...stalgic appeal to a mythic past.

"This has really been a sad after...on and evening for me," said a for...r chief justice of the Minnesota S...preme Court, his voice quavering, "...tening to the divisions between our c...mmunity, one of the most remark...able communities in the world. To ...ar the hostility to Mayo, to see the d...visions within our people, the farm...ers and the city people, it's just sad."

To take on the company in a ...mpany town is a daunting task. Af...t city planners realigned the bypass ...ay from her farm, Kathy King still ...d the fight because, she explained, i...would just go through someone ...e's place. But the longer the fight, ...e more expensive it became, the ...ore she saw that fund-raisers and ...e-cream socials were no match for ...rporate donors and public coffers. ...hen Citizens Against Rochester's ...pass asked the county board for ...nding equal to what had been giv... the city group, the vote split the ...ard along rural-city lines. When ...thy pointed out that the Citizens ...Stop the Coal Trains had not fol...wed the county's own guidelines, ...e of the commissioners read her a ...eviously written statement assert...g that even "if this group deviated ...m the County's no-build position, ...came AFTER they had spent the ...unty appropriation in approved ...ys..." The motion was resurrected ...another meeting.

"Since the board voted to give $25,000 to the city coalition," one of the three rural commissioners said, "I think it's a basic question of fairness. The rural people and the city people are all part of the county. The county board's job is to represent the citizens of Olmsted County as a whole, not to vote one group over the other."

But the measure failed exactly as the previous one had. A commissioner who belonged to both the steering committee and the city group offered this succinct response: "The applicant in this case has generated the thought that two possibilities exist and fairness is giving the same thing to both sides. I suggest that the world is not that simple."

A few weeks later the board agreed to reimburse Citizens Against Rochester's Bypass $15,000 for an environmental study the county should have done itself.

Time passes no slower in the country than in a city. It only seems that way because in the great cycle of seasons, of planting and harvesting, there is the illusion that days repeat themselves unerringly in a world without end. But they don't. Each is separate and irredeemable, and nothing is exactly the same. By year's end, the Surface Transportation Board is expected to make a decision on the project. Whatever happens, there will likely be lawsuits and more delays. Meanwhile, the City of Rochester has wasted no time allocating $40 million for a bypass and gone fishing in the state legislature and Congress for the rest. A city councilman is said to have expressed hope that "our country cousins" would understand this most "difficult" decision, and that we might return to that happy, golden yesteryear when everyone got along. That man is an optimist. Some of the scars between city and country may heal over time, but not all of them. A year ago last spring, my mother-in-law, Frances O'Neill, was diagnosed with cancer. She suffered, died, and was buried in the cemetery beside St. Bridget's Church. And the last thing she knew, would ever know, was that those bastards were plotting a railroad out her bedroom window. ■

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SIX MINUTES OF FUNNY

The deadly serious business of making people laugh

By Dennis Cass

SUNDAY

On [illegible] Montreal for Just for Laughs, the comedy festival as if it were the Olympics. "I'm running extra," he told me on the phone a month before the festival. "I'm working out. I'm eating only non-processed foods. I have a midnight curfew." Like a superstitious prizefighter, Orny also has been abstaining from alcohol, tobacco, and sex in an effort to keep his life essence pure. "I've always been smart about my craft," he says. "Very deliberate." Orny tells me his influences are Woody Allen, Robert Benchley, and S. J. Perelman, but he should also include P. T. Barnum. Throughout our conversation Orny sells me on Orny Adams, Rising Star, and like any good pitchman he does my thinking for me. "I get the [illegible]" Later [illegible] Today, when I call him from my room [illegible] Montreal where we're both staying [illegible] casting from inside my head. "They're going to have to get me a bigger bed," he says, joking about the problems he's having containing his ego. "They're going to have to knock down a *wall*." [illegible] to him, but I've heard that savvy festival attendees prefer the lower floors because the Delta's elevators are notoriously slow. Orny curses, and I imagine him up in his room, briefly seized with the fear that he'll be in the elevator when the gods of show business choose their new champion.

There is something Olympian about Just for Laughs. Now in its nineteenth year (I attended the eighteenth), the comedy festival is the world's largest, with 1.4 million fans attending eleven days of stand-up showcases, improvisational performances, one-man shows, and street theater. But there is a larger purpose than merely pleasing Canadians. Even though Just for Laughs is in Montreal, the festival serves as the American comedy industry's annual confab, playing host to more than one thousand casting agents, producers, and television executives. Headliners include big-name acts like Drew Carey, Tim Allen, and Ray Romano, but it's the smaller showcases, in particular the New Faces of Comedy, that attract the industry. Just for Laughs scouts spend the year reviewing tapes and attending club performances all over North America, then package the acts into galas and showcases, creating a marathon of comedy that is exhausting, useful, and at times disturbing, a massive Schwab's lunch counter crowded with sweater girls and producers ogling their gams.

Michael Roof is no Lana Turner, but two years ago he performed under the name "Chicken" at New Faces and was rewarded with a half-million-dollar television deal in exchange for s[ix] [illegible]en minutes of funny. A touring comedian, on the other hand, can earn as [li]ttle as six hundred dollars a week, mi[nus] out-of-pocket expenses for gas, fo[od] and lodging.[1] Just for Laughs represe[nts] a chance to leave behind the ch[ains] motels; the long, friendless days; [the] fast-food wrappers piling up in the b[ack] seat. The thirty-year-old Orny [has] worked as a professional comic for ei[ght] years and he has a regular gig at t[he] Gotham Comedy Club in New Yo[rk], but until he gets on television th[ere] will be no lead in a romantic come[dy], no comedy album, no endorseme[nt] deal for Right Guard Xtreme Spo[rts]. Fortunately, Just for Laughs happe[ns] right before development and pilot s[ea]sons, when producers are eager to [find] network jobs in sitcoms and dram[as] as well as gigs in cable's backwaters.

Tonight I attend my first showca[se], a collection of acts from Trinid[ad], Holland, Australia, New Zealand, a[nd] Zimbabwe called Globecom.[2] The f[es]tival started on Thursday, but un[like]

[1] *Comedians in the major rooms in Los Ang[eles] used to work for free. Then in March 1979 [a] comedians, including Jay Leno and David L[et]terman, struck for wages. After the strike [a] comedian jumped off a building next to [the] Comedy Store with a note pinned to his bo[dy] blaming his death on the club, which he mis[sed] by a few feet.*

[2] *Short for "global comedy." Other showca[ses] include An Evening at Eve's Tavern, an [all] female revue, and Best of the Uptown Comi[c] code for black comedians.*

ight everything has been in French, vich means that with the exception f how very thorough castmembers, nerica's comedy industry doesn't ar- until midweek. Tonight's show is at Comedyworks, in a dark, low- clinged space above Jimbo's Pub on t edge of downtown. The walls are ered with framed head shots of pre- aus performers that come in two fla- s: winsome and wacky. A half dozen industry es, identifiable by their d festival badges, are ging out by the back , but they aren't taking evening too seriously. t the audience—seven- five people who right w are happily chatting, nking cocktails, and ain-smoking strong adian cigarettes—has ested interest in laugh- g, and when the host, a arguan woman in her rties, takes the stage she greeted with enthusias- hoots and hollers. I am ger to see how foreigners ve taken a largely erican art form and sted it for their own de- ous agendas, but my pes fade when the host nounces that in high hool she was voted ost likely to talk under rture."



Although I've never heard anyone e yearbook-based humor to explore e idea of Latin American death uads, the tone, tempo, and even con- nt of the evening's acts isn't radi- lly different from the shows at uucklehead's in the Mall of Ameri- . Handsome Dutch comedian Raoul eertje thinks "burglar" is a funny rd. He also has a beef with Ameri- . "If it had a culture I'd have culture tock," he says, his anti-American sen- ment apparently stopping at his will- gness to ape Henny Youngman. The ustralians are the funniest, and I am ken with Sarah Kendall's long curly d hair and wicked smile. Many of r jokes feel young—glib takes on e improbability of movie logic or the cking of violin music that accom- anies nature-show footage of spi- ders—but her other material betrays insight and a healthy sense of the absurd. Her fellow countryman Carl Barron, however, is the crowd favorite, perhaps because he does the kind of universal, observational humor that made Jerry Seinfeld famous. Barron is small and shy, his jokes clean and precise. The audience loves him, but the industry is unmoved, which may or may not be significant. Later I will meet scouts who, rather than laugh when they hear a good joke, simply nod and say, "Funny."

Still, the audience is having a fine time, at least until Dany Boon takes the stage. When the host informs the crowd that this is the Parisian comic's first performance in English I sense a collective skepticism. Boone, his soft features sagging as if he has been losing sleep, greets the crowd with a brief wave and begins searching the pockets of his blue suit. Producing a dime-store romance novel, he says in an agitated stutter that since his release from the psychiatric hospital all he's done is read, and that everyone should try it sometime—reading, that is. The audience bristles. Boone then teaches them how to [illegible] even when I'm asleep."

[illegible] you but I [illegible] hinge on a bit where you make fun of pompous Frenchmen by acting like a pompous Frenchman when you yourself are French and [illegible] audience knows, pompous even by the bar a couple of young industry types openly mock Boone, turning up their noses as if appraising a ripe French cheese. Then people start talking. Boone has built [illegible] into his routine where the [illegible] supposed to go, and the most painful moments come when that space instead echoes with idle chatter. I feel *pity* toward you, Monsieur Boone! I think about mine when I'm told to [illegible] over with a joke when I've chewed my way through dinner-table silence, or when I've been at a job interview and suddenly become aware of the building's air-conditioning system. Still, a failed joke in a social situation is usually forgotten, and a string of bad jokes in front of a paying audience starts to feel like an insult. "It's not that they don't like your jokes," says Greg Fideler, a comedian in my hometown of Minneapolis. "They don't like *you*. They don't like the way you look. After a while, they don't like the way you dress." Unfortunately for Boone, he can't suavely [illegible] [illegible] because it would [illegible] conceptual nature of [illegible] has committed to ironically teaching the illiterate Canadian masses how to read, and he's stuck with it. When Boone finally [illegible] stage, he is glistening with [illegible] sweat, and my guess is that in the

festival ten years ago and he put a fire-

"Nicole Kidman," while

bad that he's not a little more accessible looking," she says, adding affectionately that she could see him as part of a "half hour with freaky guys."

We don't talk about jokes. One of the ironies of being professionally fun-

clubs perfecting your material, when the time comes to make a play for a TV role

the qual-

is less relevant than your presence. I've been putting

excellence when both the industry and, whether they realize it or not, the audiences are really just in search of

like Tim Conway Jr. who all to mind Nicole Kidman are in luck; less fortunate are the comedians who

British sit-com or the spokesperson for a

casting agent from ABC to ponder what kind of roles I might land, assuming I were a comedian. When I

to take a couple of days to

most

talent and industry stays,

while spacious, has a slightly funky smell. Downstairs, the festival staff are arranging transport for comedians, an-

to priests and hardcore

for tonight" shows. I am busying myself reading badges—green for talent, red for industry—when I

that says "Orny Adams." I had secretly imagined him as a character from a Howard Hawks movie, a fast-talking newspaperman wearing a fedora with a press card in the brim, but instead he is younger, a Banana Republic–model type, with messy black hair, blue eyes, and a big chewy grin. I introduce myself, and Orny gives me a big handshake, the kind that comes at you from the side. He is charismatic but fidgety; his eyes are never on me for long but drift off to the badges on people passing by. He asks me if I've seen anyone good, and, thinking I'm supposed to answer honestly, I tell him how impressed I was with Carl Barron. Orny, understanding that fame is a zero-sum game, that any attention paid to someone else is attention not being paid to him, scolds me in mock outrage. "Jesus," he says. "It's only Monday and you've already crowned the king of the festival!"

That night I head down to Club Soda to watch Orny perform in Laugh-Rodesiacs, a showcase of dating humor and relationship-based comedy. In what's either an example of dry Canadian wit or Montreal's relaxed attitude toward sex, Club Soda is in the city's red-light district. The Cleopatra across the street offers nude reviews, while down on the corner two prostitutes cruise the Burger King. Inside, with its industrial mushroom-colored walls and two-tiered ring of steep balconies, Club Soda looks like a public-school version of a cockfighting pit. I head up to the balcony to survey the crowd, a mix of younger people taking part in that awkward early dating ritual, the trip to the comedy club, and middle-aged couples, who one presumes need all the help they can get. For their money this audience is getting a more elaborate production than Globecom. The bigger, cleaner room holds around five hundred people; there are three bars efficiently producing drinks and a rock band on stage to entertain the audience and provide musical transitions. The affable Canadian host regales the crowd with tales of shopping with his wife for inflatable beds, and then brings out Orny Adams.

I can see why Orny has high hopes. His energy and stage presence are tremendous, his voice so confident and commanding the microphone seems superfluous. This is what people in the industry call "bringing it big." He grins at the crowd. "A few months ago I thought I had *lupus*," he barks out, and then turns to a man in the audience and asks, matter-of-factly, "That happen to you yet?" Orny pulls back, recalling being alone on a bus and seeing a sign that says "someone on this bus has lupus." Eventually Orny gets to his dating material, jokes about how women dodge the check in restaurants, how their voices scream in his ear like the tone from a fax machine, how every penis should come with a trust fund. I hate bits like these, not for political reasons but because they are easy. I admonish myself not to think about Orny's jokes, to concentrate instead on his comic persona, but before too I'm having trouble. Louts like Homer Simpson and Ralph Kramden are great comic characters because for all their bluster they are essentially small men, but Orny lacks vulnerability. Even when he kvetches about his inability to commit to a relationship, he never feels like the target, and when he jokes about how hard it must be to date in Canada because the dollar is so weak, the audience boos. "Don't hate me," says Orny scornfully. "It's not my fault your currency is weak. I've been waiting eight years for this. Don't hate me." After Orny makes his exit he is followed by a comic named Maryel Hooper, who quietly takes the stage, adjusts the mike stand, and wipes down the microphone with a Kleenex. "Hate germs," she says.

Later that night, after attending a Britcom, I go to Le Cordial, the Delta hotel's bar, a bland cocktail lounge with a sunken five-sided bar and around twenty tables that feels like the kind of place you would see airline pilots drinking off an overseas flight. I sit at a table of British comedians and end up talking mostly to John Moloney, socialist and former boxer, who is quick to point out the difference between the person I see

…tage and the man before me now. …n me now," he says, primly. "That …s him." My instincts tell me to coun… …t Moloney's surliness by making …h laugh, but he will have none of it. …long as I play the role of audience, …ever, Moloney is quite charming. I…ten in as the Brits gossip about oth… …comedians, trade horror stories of …novable audiences, and try to get to …heart of the comedian's soul, which …loney attributes to "high self-im… …, low self-esteem."

…t seems like a very adolescent state …mind — in my head I think I'm bet… …than you, but in my heart I know …at I'm not — and as if on cue, but per… …s without the low self-esteem, Orny …ps by. He looks tired and a little ex…erated. After I introduce him to …loney, Orny starts grousing about …w he couldn't get a VCR delivered …t his room, and complains that in …merica if you have money you can …t what you want, when you want it, …vich is perhaps the worst thing you …uld say to a British socialist. Orny …en suggests that Moloney get with …e program and come to America, be…use in America we "produce, pro…uce, PRODUCE." Orny slaps the back …f his hand into his palm for emphasis, …oks at me, and winks. Moloney, …eanwhile, stares at me as if this jin…gism were my fault, and within sec…nds they begin trading insults. Orny …kes a crack about British snobbery. …loney counters by questioning the …verage American's intelligence. Back …nd forth they go, until finally Orny …es to build a bridge, turning the top…to a discussion about getting heckled. "Maybe they're bored," says Moloney, …nger radiating off him like a mirage. "Not when I'm onstage," says Orny. …nd then, as quickly as it started, it's …er. Orny says he's tired and that he'll …tch up with me later, and after he …aves Moloney turns to me and de…mands to know if it was Orny who was …ing rude or if it was him. "He didn't …en know me," he says.

TUESDAY

Orny and I sit down for lunch at Le Bouquet, the Delta's restaurant. …e already has a favorite table, one …ith maximum visibility. Orny orders …chef salad, hold the ham. "I don't …eed that," he says. Orny was up all night analyzing last night's performance. "I was in my head," he says before plunging into a litany of what went wrong: his "young-white-male opinion" might have put off the Canadian audience, the show's 7:30 start time was too early, the spotlight had trouble following him, he went on first, he spent too much time on current events before getting into the dating material, the room had bad acoustics.

I praise his lupus joke, in part because I genuinely liked the way he says the word "lupus" and because I'm learning how to play the game. I enjoy getting attention, but for the next few days I'm going to have to do without. Orny is excited, because, barring a real news event, tomorrow he'll appear on the front page of Canada's *National Post*. "I'm not the only guy who deserves to be here," he says. "I'm lucky. I want to go to L.A. as the golden child, the guy that everyone wants to succeed. When people want you to do good, you do good. People are making me feel like I'm ready." As proof Orny produces a kind of scrapbook of his past successes. He shows me a clip quoting festival director Bruce Hills's recruitment diary, which reads: "Gotham Comedy Club: Young stud up. Orny Adams destroys; Willie and I decide to book him on the spot." Orny then praises his manager, George Shapiro, who managed Andy Kaufman and currently manages Seinfeld. "He's like a god in comedy," says Orny. "I was very smart about who I chose in making a team. I don't put down what other people do, but I don't feel like other people are doing what I'm doing onstage with my energy. I think I'm loud but I'm intelligent. I'm all about creating a media hype. Honestly, I think I can live up to it. Two years ago, I would have been nervous. It's time. It really is." Orny then shows me his business card, which doesn't have his address or phone number or email, but simply reads "I'm with George."

WEDNESDAY

The festival is picking up speed, and I spruce up and head for a gala at the Théâtre St-Denis. The street out front, charmingly lined with brownstones and shops, has been closed off so that people sitting at outdoor cafés can enjoy performances such as In Flight, four [illegible] stewardess outfits and [illegible] [illegible] instructions [illegible]. Jean Louis 2000, a tiny sweet tooth that houses the world's smallest disco. The street performers [illegible] Europe, but aside from the language barrier I imagine that the reason the American comedy industry doesn't scout the street is because they wouldn't know what to do with a mime dressed in black-leather hot pants who invites onlookers to remove the clothespins from his nipples.

The theater, which holds about 2,000 people, is by far the most elegant venue I've been to yet, with a stage large enough to hold a symphony orchestra and an audience dressed for the occasion. Gala tickets run up to around $41 Canadian ($U.S. 27), for which the crowd gets a name act like Tim Allen, Eric Idle, or William Shatner. Tonight's host is Kevin James, star of CBS's *Honeymooners* clone, *The King of Queens*. The lights go down, and the portly James is lowered to the stage wearing a silver space suit decorated with an enormous codpiece. Accompanied by the similarly attired In Motion dancers, James prances around the stage to the song "Larger Than Life," a boy-band spoof that adds up to little more than an expensive dick joke. I find that at this exact moment I have reached my limit for vulgarity. In an era when people are expected to be tireless machines, gross-out humor can be a refreshing reminder that we are still filthy, confused animals. But I have heard a lifetime's worth of low humor in the past few days, and aside from the vulgarity the sameness of the acts is disheartening. I have heard multiple jokes about how the speakerphone at fast-food drive-throughs garbles the human voice, how stoners have trouble deciding what kind of pizza toppings to order, how Cap'n Crunch cereal chafes the roof of one's mouth. I'm caught in a junk-culture feedback loop, as if some of the lazier performers have lifted their drug humor from TV because it's too much bother to get high themselves.

At intermission I wander over to the VIP tent, where Sarah Kendall sits with her manly Australian manager. I have enjoyed talking to Kendall, because she is one of the few people pre-

At around eleven, I return to Le [illegible] lobby has become as crowded and self-conscious as South Beach. Orny has [illegible] the center of the room, where he is joined by George Shapiro, who is calmly eating pasta with red sauce while his client watches intently, carefully monitoring his manager's moods. Shapiro is a little man with a deep tan and white hair [illegible] with a black shirt. I'm not sure if it's his charisma, or his power (he has shepherded the careers of legends such as Carl Reiner), or that as executive producer of *Seinfeld* Shapiro must be impossibly rich, but I can't stop staring at him. All of us, in turn, are being watched by a film crew, who [illegible] Orny's piece is part of a larger documentary about Seinfeld's return to stand-up. Orny is so wound up his eyes seem to move independently, like a lobster's, and he's unsure where to direct his attention—toward his manager, or the two cameramen, or me, or the industry at large. As promised, he has made the front page of the *National Post*, and, having collected all the copies from the gift shop that morning, Orny reads his line [illegible] a sports draft. "See," he says to Shapiro. "I'm branding it for them. I'm branding it for them." Shapiro smiles slightly and keeps on eating. Behind him, two Canadian comics look on with longing.

Orny, perhaps sensing the other acts in the room, starts fretting. "I feel guilty that other comics aren't getting this kind of attention," he says. "I don't know how to handle it." Shapiro says that be- [illegible] come out of here with class," he says.

[illegible] minute set, Orny's most recent set, he says he did "a radically different set, looser, more me" and then gives her a detailed rundown of which jokes worked and which ones didn't, a spiel that I have heard on two separate occasions [illegible] must know by heart. Orny tells Zocks his plan to tease the industry—"Here's a little bit of Orny," he [illegible] it out with his thumb and forefinger—before impressing them fully at New Faces tomorrow night. But for all Orny's self-assurance he can't stop kicking himself over his first show. "Do what you do," says Shapiro, who then turns to Zocks to discuss tennis. "Someday I'll be able to talk the California talk," Orny says to me, and adds that one of his chief worries is that a television executive will ask him to lose weight. I must look confused, because Orny explains. "One thing I don't have control over," he says. "Eating." He attempts to pinch a roll of fat on his waist, an absurd gesture considering there isn't much to grab. "I've never been able to get cut, ripped," he says. Outside the bar, a television crew trains a Sun Gun on another comic. Orny squints. "I don't like this lighting," he says.

THURSDAY

Los Angeles has come to Canada. The Delta lobby is packed, leaving people to improvise temporary meeting places on the steps and in the street. Comedy World, a company that broadcasts comedy over the Internet and radio, has set up a temporary studio at the bottom of the stairs, and comics take turns doing bits while their agents and managers circulate. Orny, reliable as ever, is in the lobby making sure he's seen, but he looks tired, and when a random passerby yells, "Fresh face!" Orny smiles, waves, and then his face falls. "So much attention," he says.

Tonight, at seven-thirty, Orny appears in the first New Faces of Comedy showcase. Sarah Kendall is in the second. A third group will appear tomorrow night, followed by a second round for everyone Friday and Saturday. On the [illegible] campus, the venue for the showcase, I have butterflies for Orny—whose parents have joined his entourage of Shapiro, film crew, and me—and the other comics. It's a sunny day and the beautiful people of Montreal are out enjoying soft-serv[illegible] cream. It feels too bright and ear[illegible] comedy, but soon I'm inside the [illegible] where Orny is onstage in a shiny le[illegible] jacket getting a feel for the room. A [illegible] tain painted like a brick wall hangs [illegible] back of the stage to give the place a [illegible] edy-club look, but otherwise it feel[illegible] a music venue, with black walls, c[illegible] floors, and an alcohol smell. Afte[illegible] show's coordinator gives the ten [illegible] formers a pep talk, I trail Orny ups[illegible] to a makeshift greenroom. Someon[illegible] been kind enough to set some pre[illegible] and chips on paper plates, but the [illegible] medians are so nervous it might as[illegible] be cat food. A sign on the wall warns [illegible] formers not to exceed their allotte[illegible] minutes, an awfully short time to [illegible] vince even the most profligate st[illegible] boss to part with his money.

Orny drapes his jacket over a c[illegible] and sits down to listen to a tap [illegible] what he calls "a perfect six-minut[illegible] from the Gotham Comedy Club [illegible] his Walkman. Between me, Orny, [illegible] his camera crew there isn't room fo[illegible] the other performers, so most l[illegible] while the others sit quietly, as if w[illegible] ing for bad news. Orny says that [illegible] mally he would meditate or w[illegible] around New York, but, given the st[illegible] performance schedule, he's trying [illegible] trim his set, which he has timed [illegible] seven minutes, forty-one seconds. [illegible] loud he frets over whether or not to [illegible] a bit about shrimp, but even tho[illegible] Orny is nervous he is self-posses[illegible] enough to play his worries to the c[illegible] era. Whenever I ask him a quest[illegible] he answers to the lens.

Outside the club is filling up. [illegible] balcony is reserved for the sixty-[illegible] members of the industry, who [illegible] perched on three tiers of stools. [illegible] prime seats overlooking the audie[illegible] are equipped with an Itty Bitty B[illegible] Light for taking notes, and two vid[illegible] projection screens hang from the c[illegible] ing to give casting agents a previe[illegible] how the young hopefuls look flatte[illegible] out by television. The audience lau[illegible] at Dom Irrera, the showcase's host, [illegible] once the New Faces start coming [illegible] they grow quiet, while the indus[illegible] looks as if they're attending a city-co[illegible] cil meeting. Orny, who's due to go [illegible] seventh, emerges from the greenro[illegible] to assess the crowd, and pronoun[illegible] them cold. The first act goes on, a[illegible]

r it's time for Orny's prep ritual, lis-ng to Bob Dylan's "The Times ey Are A-Changin'." A few min-later, as the third act goes on, Orny me he's come across a new prob-. Some hoser has informed him that e is no Canadian equivalent of the Fs, which mucks up one of his ch lines. Right then a comedian ned Danielle Hoover walks in pant-as if she's having an anxiety attack. t kidding," she says, though I can she's not. Orny and another co-ian exchange looks but offer no port.

he showcase plods on, and no one sitting, perhaps because the come-ns are torn between trying to please audience and trying to impress the stry upstairs. Then it's Orny's turn. ow I've got to go live up to the e," he says. I follow Orny along the cony, then watch him walk to the tom of the stairs, where he waits the wings for his introduction and n bounds onstage in all his Orny-s. "A few months ago I thought I d *lupus*," he says. "That happen to et." The audience laughs, but it ls thin. Orny pushes out his mate-l, but he's not connecting, and the re he doesn't connect the harder pushes. Frustrated, he breaks the rth wall, a mistake that even Dany one didn't make. "Loosen up!" he s, looking at the audience in mock rm. "Are you afraid to laugh in nada?" The mike squeals and the m grows quiet. "I'm going to be up night worrying about this," he says, cing the stage. "I've waited eight rs for this." Members of the audi-ce fold their arms across their chests, ile upstairs the red badges shift un-nfortably in their chairs. Orny seems be in the middle of a meltdown, d when he calls out to George piro, as if somehow his manager's d name can save him, he finally ts a sympathy laugh but shows no titude. "I train you well," he says fore returning to his routine.

"They weren't laughing at anybody," ny says when he reaches the top of e stairs. I hold my tongue. I assume ny knows he shouldn't have pro-ked the audience, but by the time he aches the greenroom he has con-nced himself he killed. "I did it, dn't I, George?" he says to Shapiro, who is waiting, calm as a monk. "I did it," says Orny. "I did it." Shapiro nods along as Orny parses his act, noting where he finally got the laugh. All Shapiro can do is encourage, reassure. Orny looks around and wonders where everybody is. He is shaking slightly, still processing the excess adrenaline. "I was expecting more of a rush from the industry," he says. After the last act the audience trails out, but the industry sticks around for the next batch. Orny tries to circulate. He asks a casting agent from ABC if they give combined film and television deals, but she is noncommittal. "I liked him on Monday," says Ann Maney, while a development woman from Fox says she hates it "when people waste my fucking time."

The second round of New Faces, which goes on at 9:30, fares better. Perhaps it's the later time slot or just the right mix of people, but the crowd is more forgiving. Sarah Kendall is introduced by the wrong name and recovers gracefully, but it's Corey Holcomb who piques my interest. Holcomb, a formidable black man wearing a patchwork hat, brings his gin and tonic onstage. "I'm extra ghetto," he says. "I've got two six-year-old kids . . . and they ain't twins." Every time Holcomb starts to take a sip from his cocktail he delivers another line, as if it just popped into his head. "I'm no good," he says. "When we break up I'm going to move across the street with that chick you don't like." Thirty-three years of watching television hasn't turned me into a violent sociopath like it's supposed to, but it has wired my brain to recognize television characters when they appear in the wild. I doubt even the UPN would do a show about a borderline alcoholic who has two six-year-old kids who ain't twins, but it's a good example of how the more you like someone the funnier he or she is. Sure, the cocktail has to become a less controversial beverage, but they'll work it out. After all, that's what writers are for.

Holcomb, who comes on next to last, is followed by Sam Tripoli, a broad, physical comedian with bug eyes and a devil beard. I'm about to settle in for another seven minutes of comedy when thirty seconds into Tripoli's act the industry starts packing up, lighting cigarettes, [illegible] white [illegible] people [illegible] then [illegible] acts like it's not happening, but, perhaps out of desperation, his routine becomes broader and broader—at one point he pretends to be a paraplegic stripper in a wheelchair—and if a giant hook were to come from the wings and pull him offstage it would be an act of mercy.

That night, Comedy World throws the first big party. I ride up to the second floor in an elevator run by a silent beefy boy wearing tight jeans and no shirt. Inside the enormous warehouse space are several bars and a dance floor inhabited by more shirtless men and a handful of women dressed in seductive Gestapo outfits. Waiters circulate, offering canapés and elaborate mimosas; video installations play swirly visuals; and on the off chance you still can't find something to talk about Comedy World has been kind enough to salt the party with a half-dozen statuesque French Canadian transvestites. But for all this there are only about fifty people here; it's midnight and I'm early.

Loud music, sprawling floor plan, store-bought chaos—I can't imagine a more inhospitable environment for comedians. Even within the relative calm of Le Cordial, many comics seem lost, unhinged by the absence of a clear division between performer and audience. Seasoned veterans still cling to their managers for support, and one Canadian comic is uncomfortable talking to real people he only speaks in funny accents. Over the course of the festival I've heard comics say they would rather be onstage than at a dinner party with friends, as if the ideal social experience is performing at an intimate club on a weekend night, in a time slot early enough that the crowd is tipsy but not too drunk to control. "It's the one part of my day that makes sense," says Canadian comic Brent Butt.

I find a side room away from the bad house music and [illegible] Williams, a lanky Canadian with bleached blond hair. Williams

to [illegible] material because he wanted [illegible] No one does. Later, the party organizers bring out an enormous slab of meat, and I watch as George Shapiro joins the queue. If he has the hot [illegible] should be surrounded by industry, but right now he's all alone, just a regular guy waiting in line for roast beef.

FRIDAY

It's 3:30 in the afternoon, and around 150 comedians and industry types are gathered in a bright, antiseptic conference room at the Delta for the first annual managers roast. Given the early hour I expected sparse attendance, but the room keeps filling, perhaps for the breakfast buffet. I, for one, have never been more grateful for a slice of melon in my life. Just for Laughs COO Bruce Hills opens."Hi, I'm Orny Adams," he says. It's a gentle potshot, but my stomach tightens in sympathy. I look around but I don't see Orny, and I hope it's because he's not here. For the next hour, the comedians mostly tell predictable jokes about how managers don't return phone calls, but other comics are also targets. "Why did the Chicken cross the road?" asks host Jeffrey Ross. "To make a shitty pilot." Dave Becky, who manages Chicken, chuckles. Chicken, who isn't at the festival this year, proves to be a popular topic, as does Orny. Manager Barry Katz says Orny is "up in his room building a new rumor mill," while comedian Phil Tag says that someone needs to keep an eye on Orny because "after last night he's going to kill himself."

All this leaves a bad taste. I understand the jokes about Chicken—getting half a million dollars to make a pilot should make you a target—but I don't feel that Orny, for all his bluster, deserves such scorn from this crowd. Everyone here has pimped for himself or someone else, and Orny's crime seems to be that he violated the unspoken rule that it's acceptable to shill as long as it's not for yourself. A few minutes later I run into a depressed Orny in the lobby. Before the festival he bought three thousand dollars' worth of new clothes, and today his slick wardrobe mocks his sad expression. Orny [illegible] at the roast, standing in the ba[illegible] where I imagine him trying to p[illegible] good face on it as he is now. "[illegible] other comics are being cold to r[illegible] says Orny, his voice quiet and c[illegible] fused. I think I am about to witn[illegible] Orny in an introspective mome[illegible] that he realizes he might have ta[illegible] his obsessive planning and self-p[illegible] motion too far. I am wrong. "W[illegible] all the hype," says Orny, "I th[illegible] people wanted me to fail."

Later that night at Club So[illegible] Ann Maney comes up to me i[illegible] rush and says we may have anot[illegible] "Chicken situation." She arrows [illegible] finger toward the exit, and ten m[illegible] utes later we're climbing the stair[illegible] Comedyworks, the same club wh[illegible] I watched Globecom five long, l[illegible] days ago. Walking in I feel like [illegible] entered a completely differ[illegible] venue. The audience is still poli[illegible] Canadian, but the back of the r[illegible] is so crowded with industry [illegible] people are sharing stools, cramm[illegible] themselves into corners, holding [illegible] to anything for support. "Ei[illegible] people whispering equals one fat [illegible] talking," says a voice over the P[illegible] "It's scientifically proven." Desp[illegible] the warning, the red badges cha[illegible] softly through host Todd Glass's [illegible] troduction, and when Frank Cali[illegible] do takes the stage Maney excu[illegible] herself. "He already has a deal," [illegible] says.

Maney returns in time [illegible] Chelsea Handler, the young fem[illegible] comic who is the reason we're he[illegible] I'm not sure if the audience noti[illegible] the sudden drop in noise, but [illegible] sure they would be very surprised [illegible] turn around and see everyone [illegible] tiptoes, their mouths parted in [illegible] pectation. Handler, young, blon[illegible] and ponytail cute, looks nerv[illegible] when she takes the stage, but [illegible] quickly disarms everyone wit[illegible] warm, blinking smile. Her act, h[illegible] ever, is less amiable, a sour acco[illegible] of her love life and the hatred [illegible] feels for happy couples. Handler s[illegible] she doesn't want poetry. "Pay [illegible] rent," she says. "You go, girl," yell[illegible] fellow female comic from the ba[illegible] but judging from the ambivale[illegible] looks on the faces in the back I c[illegible] already tell what the verdict

Isea Handler will be that beau
y nd spite are an unfriendly com
i tion for television. It's the same
n blem Orny had during Laugh-
t esiacs. Audiences don't want to
r attractive people complain
b t their love life; it offends their
e e of fairness.

tter Handler's set Maney and I
w I downstairs where we can talk.
I tty," Maney says like someone
w sees pretty every day. "She did a
d job talking about how bitter
l is about couples. Personally, I
a e a hard time with women who
g owest common denominator."
M ney seems a little blue, not be-
c se Chelsea represents a missed
o portunity for Fox but because
C lsea represents a missed opportu-
n for Chelsea. "The biggest obsta-
l is 'do you think that person is a
l w,'" she says, and suddenly the
c a of a person "being a show"
s ms like an inhuman burden.
M ney says she has around ten
p ple on her radar at all times, and
r alize she must see near hits like
H ndler all the time, which must
w ur on the soul. On a happier note
i says that Fox has signed Corey
H lcomb to a holding deal. She'd
b n tracking him for a year but last
n ht convinced her. "We're waiting
f people to accept their star poten-
ti ," she says. "Because it's a big
f ." While we're talking, Handler
a her manager sit down at a near-
b table, and it soon becomes clear
t y're not going to have to form a
r eiving line. Maney frowns with
s mpathy. "I better go over and say
h lo," she says.

SATURDAY

Orny is restored. "Unbelievable, unbelievable!" he says about last night's performance, the second time around for New Faces. He is back to speaking in exclamation points. "It was exactly at the level I needed to perform at to maintain the reputation that I carved out for myself. Rythmically it was perfect. I was smiling. I was in the moment. The minute I got offstage I got hugs from industry people." Since I didn't see the set, I can't tell if Orny truly did well or if he only convinced himself he killed, but either way he's some-



SOLUTION TO THE OCTOBER PUZZLE

S	V	K	R	F	B	R	E	S	T	E	D
P	E	L	V	I	S	E	S	C	R	U	X
I	R	E	L	A	N	D	C	A	I	R	N
R	A	P	H	T	F	E	A	M	P	B	G
E	N	T	E	R	A	S	T	U	A	R	T
O	D	O	R	A	L	C	A	T	R	A	Z
V	A	M	O	O	S	E	D	O	T	I	C
J	E	A	N	N	E	N	A	M	I	N	G
X	D	N	J	A	H	D	G	E	T	W	O
F	L	I	E	R	O	X	O	N	I	A	N
R	E	A	R	C	O	M	A	T	O	S	E
W	I	C	K	E	D	I	T	C	N	H	R

NOTES FOR "TRISKAIDEKACODE"

Puzzle claim: by Dan Amos

Anagrams are indicated with an exclamation point.

ACROSS: 1. haymow*; 5. *; 9. PE-L-vrses; 11. cru-X; 12. I-reland; 13. ca(r)n; 17. [illegible]; 18. std. Dan; 19. OD's; 20. Meatus; 21. [illegible]; 22. [illegible]; 24. [illegible]; NE; 26. NeAmm(o)n; 30. [illegible]; 31. OXO; intrlocx; Asm; 32. [illegible]; 33. [illegible]; 34. [illegible]; 35. [illegible]; 36. [illegible]

DOWN: 1. homophone; 2. hidden; 3. klep(to-man)iac*; 4. two mngs.; 5. redesce[illegible] N.D.; 6. reversal; 7. *; 8. clique (hidden); 10. two mngs.; 14. her-O; 15. false[illegible]-hood; 16. [illegible]; 21. hidden; 22. [illegible]; 23. [illegible]; 25. two mngs.; 27. [illegible]; 28. [illegible]; 29. [illegible]; 31. [illegible]; 32. [illegible]; 33. [illegible]; 34. [illegible]; 35. [illegible]; 36. [illegible]

...ic Kendall. Earlier that ... American manager Dave ... Chicago, told me he will co-manage Kendall in the United States. Kendall looks as down-to-earth as ever in her jeans and green corduroy jacket, but she isn't sure what to make of all the attention coming her way, so she is chain-smoking, which seems about the most sensible thing one could do. "It bombards your senses," she says, her face flushed. "You don't know what's genuine." Right then, Bud Friedman, the owner of the Improv in L.A., stops by our table. Friedman is balding and wears a monocle—put him in jodhpurs and give him a riding crop and he could pass for a movie mogul. When he spies Kendall his face lights up with delight. "I've been looking for you for three days," he says tenderly as he lowers himself to one knee. He touches the arm of her chair. Friedman plays the suitor well, praising Kendall's performances and inquiring into her future. Kendall smiles back, nodding, but she can't seem to look at him for long without becoming more embarrassed. After Friedman leaves, Barron and Kendall appraise his performance. "That was a good one," says Barron. Kendall laughs in disbelief. "He knelt down to talk to us," she says. "Good body language."

SUNDAY

The festival is over. There are a handful of shows tonight, and one final blowout party that I know I will not have the energy to attend. Down in the lobby people are checking out, and those who haven't left physically have checked out emotionally. All except Orny, the only person still filled with energy and will. He says he has something for me, and pulls out his scrapbook. It seems that Orny has taken the time to write up quotes that I might find useful in my article. "Friday's set cured Thursday's set like a Band-Aid," he says. Orny checks for my reaction; I am a corpse. "Here's the other one," he says. "Just for Laughs aged me seven Hollywood years," he says. Orny must sense that I didn't get the reference becau... clarifies. "Like dog years," he ... Then Orny is off. I say my goo... and wish him luck as he walks ... I'm about to head back to my ... when Orny turns around and sh... across the lobby, "Don't fuck ... Dennis!" I wave and promise th... won't.

EPILO...

A year after the festival, Or... chastened but optimistic. ... certainly been a humbling exp... ence since Montreal," he say... think I've grown up ten Holly... years. I hold myself different... don't think you'd recognize m... meanor. My hair is longer. My ... tude is different . . . I have to t... before I speak . . . You know ... hammed Ali, he was the grea... Think of other examples of pe... who really promoted themselves ... people got a kick out of it. For co... dy it doesn't work."

Perhaps due to George Shap... clout, Orny has since appeared on ... *terman* and was paired with writer ... Ember (*Grace Under Fire, The ... Carey Show*) in a development ... with Warner Brothers Televis... Since Orny loves to riff on cur... events—"Right now I can't stop t... ing about the shark bites"—he w... ed to play a cranky consumer ac... cate, a sort of better-looking Ra... Nader. Warner Brothers declined ...

Cast back in the talent poo... L.A. comedians, Orny gets ... cible when talking about ... act—"I'm not getting less funny ... but during most of our conversat... he is quieter, older, even tentat... "I don't want to be too preachy,' ... says. "Sometimes I watch a tape ... myself and say, 'Tone it dow... You're not leading a cult here ... This new, self-deprecating O... Adams would have fared far bet... at the festival. But even as ... grieves over the loss of that opp... tunity, he takes cheer in the not... that suffering is esential for ... artist's development. "Thanks fo... year of pain," he says. "The o... thing I can say is, thank God it h... pened at this point in my career a... not at a point when it could ha... cost me millions of dollars."

NEW BOOKS

by Guy Davenport



Around each pole of Jupiter, largest of the planets, sits a halo of wildly agitated strips of light twisting and juggling, shooting up and darting down. Earth, too, wears these lights, the northern manifestation of which the French astronomer Pierre Gassendi gave a Latin name to in the seventeenth century: *aurora borealis*, "northern dawn." To the Lapps, who see them most often, they are "a fierce and powerful presence," and you will be fed in your boots if you look directly at them. You can see Jupiter's auroras

Daniel Fischer's MISSION JUPITER: THE SPECTACULAR [illegible] (Copernicus Books, $32), a generously illustrated, reader-friendly account of a look, close up, over six years, at what Galileo Galilei squinted at in his toy telescope in 1610.

To get a better look at Earth's aurora borealis a Norwegian team of scientists climbed Mount Haldde, well inside the Arctic Circle, in October 1899. The temperature was twenty-five degrees below freezing, and inside their stone observatory a pan of water turned to ice one foot from the stove. Bjorn Hellandhansen, age twenty-two, lost his fingers to frostbite. Lucy Lee's account of this heroic and horrifying expedition, in [illegible] (Knopf, $24), is as gripping as a Conan Doyle adventure. Her book is a full scale biography of the expedition's leader, Professor Kristian Birkeland (1867–1917). His theory that the aurora was solar wind interacting with Earth's magnetic field, published (in French) in 1901, was instantly dismissed by [illegible] British physicists. Whoever heard of atomic particles (electrons) coming from the sun (and they made up the bulk of photons we call *sunlight*)? What they really meant was that Norway, then a province of Sweden, does not have physicists. Herring and reindeer and skiing, yes, but not physicists. (Joyce and Shaw had the same trouble convincing England that Henrik Ibsen was a genius.) Roald Amundsen's telegram to Robert Scott in 1910—"Heading South"—[illegible] (Norwegians were pioneers at both poles: Fridtjof Nansen came within four degrees of the north in April 1895, a good thirteen years before the Cook and Peary expe-





[illegible] month before Scott, in 1911.)

Birkeland [illegible] like a demon, harnessing waterfalls for electricity, manufacturing chemical fertilizer, inventing an electric cannon, charting "zodiacal light" (a wispy counterpart of the auroras, visible at the equator), and disturbing the University of Oslo with periodic explosions in his lab. He died exhausted and frustrated, in Japan, and his last book has never been found.

Birkeland's life can be seen as a scrutiny and deployment of fire: celestial, chemical, solar, combustive. There are two new books named after that wild animal among the four ancient elements, Professor Stephen J. Pyne's [illegible] (University of Washington Press, $18.95) and one by Sebastian Junger, entitled simply FIRE (Norton, $24.95). Pyne's study is (like one written sixteen years ago by John W. Lyons) a scientific survey of the chemistry, history, danger, and [illegible] of fire.

We first encountered fire as lightning and [illegible] the wrath of angry gods. Tamed, it bakes bread, keeps us warm in winter, makes metal malleable for shaping, and lights the dark. It can revert to its wild nature in a split second, burn down cities and woods. Dresden on fire in the Second World War was a worse disaster in terms of lives and property than Hiroshima. On the same day in 1871 that Chicago had its great fire, a much [illegible] Peshtigo, Wisconsin, killed 1,500 people. (Paul Metcalf's [illegible] graphic book about this fire: *Firebird*, included in Volume 3 of Coffee House Press's *Paul Metcalf: Collected Works*. Pyne happened to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

THE BONES OF MUZHIKS

Isaac Babel gets lost in translation

By Francine Prose

Discussed in this essay:

The Complete Works of Isaac Babel, translated by Peter Constantine. W. W. Norton, December 2001. 992 pages. $39.95.

Like all the stories in Isaac Babel's 1926 masterpiece, *Red Cavalry*, "My First Goose" is set among the horse soldiers of Commander Budenny's Red Army during the bloody Russo-Polish War of 1920. Its narrator is an idealistic young intellectual who finds himself riding with the Cossacks—roughnecks who have nothing but contempt for a bespectacled law graduate from St. Petersburg. A sympathetic quartermaster suggests that the way to win his comrades' respect is to 'mess up a lady." But as it turns out, any living creature will do. Hungry, tormented by cooking aromas, our hero kills his landlady's goose by cracking its skull under his boot. He then orders the old woman to cook it. This impulsive display of brutality convinces the Cossacks that the narrator might, after all, be a human being. They invite him to share their pork and cabbage soup and allow him to read to them Lenin's speech from *Pravda*. Later, "we slept, all six of us, beneath a wooden roof that let in the stars, warming one another, our legs intermingled. I dreamed: and in my dreams saw women. But my heart, stained with bloodshed, grated and brimmed over."

This brief synopsis naturally leaves out much of what makes the story great, details such as the landlady's magnificently despondent line ("I want to go and hang myself"), repeated twice in the narrative, and, more importantly, the story's subtext, which is sex: an erotic charge ignited by the first paragraph's description of the division commander Savitsky ("His long legs were girls sheathed to the neck in ri boots"), and exploded in the lines, in that tangle of sleeping bodies.

I was eighteen, a college so more, when our writing instru read us the whole of "My F Goose." This was in 1966, and aspiring novelists all, were grea mirers of Hemingway, with wh Babel shared much: a similar int in storytelling, in themes of war courage, and violence; an obses with style, extreme compression, economy; and a commitment to r talizing the written language thro a precise, elegant fidelity to the ken vernacular. In "My First Goo we heard something that resem Hemingway, but stripped of his mance and sentiment, and with that failure of nerve caused by longing (so damaging to a writer) the reader's admiration and af tion. If Hemingway told us that v happened and brave men fou them, Babel suggested that viole was sexy, that something in hum nature liked it—even required it. Hemingway hero would pray what the soldier in Babel's "After Battle" asks from fate: "the simp of proficiencies—the ability to my fellow-men." And if Hemingw wrote about "men without wome Babel matter-of-factly, with neit titillation nor alarm, zeroed in the homoerotic nature of army life

Our instructor told us a few fa about Babel, culled from Lio Trilling's introduction to the 19 edition of *The Collected Stories*. B

Francine Prose is a contributing editor to Harp



Odessa in 1894, he moved to St. Petersburg to become a writer and published a story in a magazine edited by his mentor, Maxim Gorky, who advised him to go out and experience life and to work on his prose style. He joined the czar's army, then the Soviet Army, and, in the hero of "My First Goose," rode with the Cossacks in the Budenny Campaign—an odd choice, since Babel was Jewish and the Cossacks were known for their murderous anti-Semitic rampages. After his stories began to appear in the 1920s, he became an international success; *Red Cavalry* was published here in 1929.

His personal life was complex; he fathered three children by three different women and habitually obfuscated and mythologized his past. After his wife and daughter emigrated to Paris, he lived with Antonina Pirozhkova, an engineer whose touching memoir, *At His Side*, describes his final years. Under pressure from the government to voice the party ideology (in an address to the 1934 Soviet Writers' Congress, he praised Stalin's literary style), Babel wrote less and less. In 1939 he was arrested by the secret police and died, it was said, in a labor camp two or three years later.

Today we know that Babel was never sent to a labor camp but was shot in prison eight months after his arrest, a fact that the government had from his family for decades. Other questions remain, among them the riddle of why he was killed, and, most puzzlingly, the central enigma of his career and reputation. Despite his relatively modest output, he is widely considered to be one of the most important writers of this century. Maxim Gorky called him "the great hope of Russian literature." Harold Bloom has edited a book of essays about his work. According to Cynthia Ozick, "If we wish to complete, and transmit, the literary configuration of the twentieth century, the image that will enduringly stain history's retina—now is the time of [sic] is past time) to set Babel beside Kafka." Novelists, poets, and serious readers speak of his work with an intense—and almost cultlike—respect and devotion. So why is Babel's work not widely known, nor his name universally recognized, among the literate public?

The foregoing summary of "My First Goose" suggests a possible cause. Babel is one of the darkest, most disturbing, least reassuring, and least politically correct of writers—which is not to say that his work is unrelievedly grim, or that it isn't often lively, charming, and funny. He is, however, unrelenting in his refusal to editorialize, to moralize, to interpret. As Lionel Trilling wrote, "one could not at once know just how the author was responding to the brutality he recorded, whether he thought it good or bad, justified or not justified. Nor was this the only thing to be in doubt about. It was not really clear how the author felt about, say, Jews; or about religion; or about the goodness of man." Babel's heroes are gangsters, whores, and soldiers, as well as boys and young men in the process of finding out that the world is populated with gangsters, whores, and soldiers.

Countless writers have linked sex and death, violence and art, but few have made that linkage appear so raw and unromantic. Sex, in Babel's stories, is raucous and juicy, compelling and dirty; he accomplishes in a few allusive sentences what Henry Miller required a trilogy of novels to convey. "Guy de Maupassant," a tale about an aspiring writer who trades

directly counter to the prevailing popular taste for sympathetic characters and an affirmative worldview. If [illegible] and transparency, Babel's work, to quote Trilling again, is "heavily charged with . . . intensity, irony, and ambiguousness."

I have with regret stopped using Babel in the literature classes I teach. My last attempt involved his instructive and remarkably different [illegible] ("My First Fee" and "Answer to an Inquiry") of the same plot: a boy is infatuated with a prostitute who takes him home. Inspired by ardor, he invents a sad tale of [illegible] homosexual Armenian, a lie that convinces the whore that she and the kid are colleagues, and which moves her to offer him a night of love for free. Several of my graduate students were offended by what they consid- [illegible] the whore with a heart of gold, as well as by an author who tacitly condoned a hero who would deceive an oppressed female sex worker. But their horror was nothing compared to that of my class of University of Utah un- [illegible] to whom I assigned Babel's "The Sin of Jesus."

Cast as a deceptively lighthearted [illegible] fred to be her husband and protec- [illegible] going to bed at night. But one evening Arina gets drunk, and in a fit of lust, rolls over on the angel and crushes him. Arina is soon pregnant [illegible] conclusion he berates Jesus for having [illegible] and beyond her [illegible] When the Savior, suitably chas- [illegible] her pardon, Arina replies, "'There's no forgiveness for you, Jesus Christ . . . No forgiveness, and never will be.'" My students were appalled, I think, not merely by the blasphemy, but by the vision behind it: that is, by Babel's view of a universe without sense or order, a world in which, if we are to love one another at all, we must first admit that we often behave no better than animals—and, in fact, often worse.

The hope of many Babel fans has been that this fall, with W.W. Norton's publication of *The Complete Works of Isaac Babel*, translated by Peter Constantine, Babel will at long last receive his rightful place in the canon. The book has been anticipated with great excitement and feted in the ways (an evening of tributes by well-known writers at the 92nd Street Y, etc.) that attend a major cultural event. Of course, Babel's stories have been rendered into English before, with varying success, by translators including, among others, Walter Morison, Max Hayward, Andrew MacAndrew, and Avrahm Yarmolinsky. The Morison translation is considered the best, and it is often quite good, but a certain datedness, as well as troublesome quirks—the capricious omission of sentences and occasionally of whole paragraphs—have made one wish for an even better job. In 1964, *Isaac Babel: The Lonely Years 1925–1939* made available a handful of previously unpublished stories, letters, and historical documents, including his speech to the 1934 Writers Congress. Still more short fiction appeared in *You Must Know Everything* (1969). *Isaac Babel: The Forgotten Prose* (translated by Nicholas Stroud, 1978) introduced into English a selection of his journalistic reportage, together with stories, fragments from his 1920 diary, and the "treatment" of his script for the 1926 silent film "Wandering Stars." Most recently, the publication of his 1920 *War Diary* (translated by H. T. Willetts) permitted readers to compare journal entries made during the Russo-Polish War [illegible] the fiction Babel crafted from [illegible] raw material.

Because of the sporadic manner [illegible] which his work has appeared, [illegible] because the circumstances of [illegible] death have made it difficult to k [illegible] how much of his writing survi [illegible] Babel was considered to have [illegible] duced a slim, indeed a virtu [illegible] anorexic, oeuvre. But the cur [illegible] volume—nearly 1,000 page [illegible] length—has respectable heft. Its [illegible] pearance marks not only the [illegible] time that his work has been ass [illegible] bled in one place but also the [illegible] time that many of the pieces inc [illegible] ed—fiction, plays, screenpl [illegible] sketches, journalistic and occasi [illegible] essays, notes, and fragments—h [illegible] appeared in English at all.

For admirers of Babel, the [illegible] book is veined with opportuni [illegible] (such as the pieces in this mon [illegible] Readings section) to follow [illegible] progress of his career and his w [illegible] ing method. One can compare th [illegible] versions of "Squadron Lea [illegible] Trunov," contrast the synopsis [illegible] the screenplay he wrote for "W [illegible] dering Stars" (here called "Roam [illegible] Stars"), and watch him experim [illegible] with techniques and strategies: [illegible] turns, a chatty, plain-style narrat [illegible] voice, the epistolary form. It is fa [illegible] nating to read the knee-jerk pro [illegible] ganda he dispatched from Frat [illegible] ("the political system of capita [illegible] government disfigures the wonde [illegible] face of this country") alongside m [illegible] nuanced fictions set in Paris. We [illegible] see him returning to—and expa [illegible] ing—such themes as the voluptuo [illegible] ness of surrendering to the corr [illegible] tion of one's own innocence; and [illegible] see him perfecting, in fiction, [illegible] terse narrative shorthand he pr [illegible] ticed in newspaper reports on life [illegible] old age homes, maternity wards, [illegible] in the St. Petersburg streets. Perh [illegible] most fascinatingly, one can obse [illegible] Babel master a trick at which he [illegible] came expert: ending a story in a w [illegible] that creates a sudden, profound [illegible] lence, through which the final li [illegible] echo. "Guy de Maupassant" co [illegible] cludes with one such moment, as t [illegible] narrator finishes reading the biog [illegible] phy of the anonymous French writ [illegible] "I read the book to the end and [illegible]

f bed. The fog came close to the
ow; the world was hidden from
dy heart contracted as the fore-
ng of some essential truth
ed me with light fingers." In
934 speech to the Writers' Con-
, Babel spoke of himself as hav-
come a "master of the art of si-
"—a veiled reference to the
ng effect that ideology and cen-
ip had on his work but also per-
, less obviously, to that aura of
ness that makes his writing
ue and devastating.

et despite its length and rich-
and regardless of how grateful
is for its existence, *The Complete*
ks may have the unfortunate ef-
of making readers unfamiliar
Babel's work wonder what all
fuss is about. For the Constan-
translation too often makes one
that, on some basic level, Babel
not have been, after all, a very
writer.

The noble, notoriously under-
rded and undervalued job of a
rary translator demands of its
titioners an almost alchemical
, transforming great writing in
language into, ideally, great
ing in another, a task freighted
the additional burden of inhab-
g the mind of the author, com-
icating those qualities of tone,
sonality, and voice that distin-
h one writer from another. Each
d, each phrase, of the original
suggests a myriad of choices and
ents countless tiny decisions that
ce all the difference between a
k that sounds as if it were written
d written well) in the language
which it is being translated and
that has all the earmarks (awk-
d constructions, stiff dialogue,
eign-sounding locutions) of a
ched translation.

No one, it is safe to say, becomes a
nslator in the hopes of getting
or famous. Still, it is easy to find
h heartening and terrifying exam-
s of how crucially important indi-
ual translators can be. We can as-
ne that Gregory Rabassa's
gnificent rendition of Gabriel
cía Márquez's *One Hundred Years*
Solitude accelerated the velocity
h which it was recognized and
braced as a masterpiece in this
country. One reason that Chekhov's stories continue to seem so alive and timely may be the modest, nearly characterless, and therefore timeless quality of Constance Garnett's prose. A fresh, felicitous translation can resurrect a venerated but too rarely read classic, as happened recently when Richard Howard's Modern Library version of *The Charterhouse of Parma* put Stendhal on the *Los Angeles Times* bestseller list.

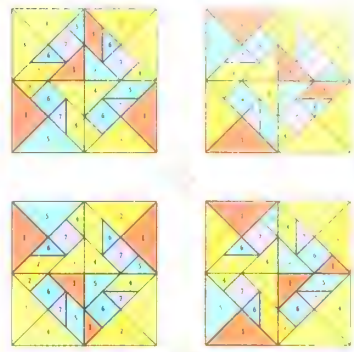
Conversely, less fortunate authors can have their works essentially translated out of existence. Such may be the fate of the Mexican novelist Juan Rulfo, whose great novel, *Pedro Páramo*, has barely survived not one but two lackluster English versions. Contemporary writers living here—among them, the Romanian Norman Manea—have suffered the consequences of inadequate translation. Nabokov has claimed that Gogol cannot be read at all in translation; once, when I tried to teach "The Overcoat," I discovered that the abysmal version in my students' anthology had not merely failed to convey Gogol's irony and humor but rendered the story unintelligible on the simplest plot level.

Although translators are, traditionally, a retiring and humble lot, one can hardly blame Peter Constantine for wanting us to know what a monumental challenge he has undertaken.

> In translating *The Complete Works of Isaac Babel*, I was constantly struck by the different registers of Babel's voice in different stories. The minute I thought I had pinned down Babel's style, it transformed itself into something very different in the next story. . . .
>
> I have found in translating other authors, such as Anton Chekhov and Thomas Mann, that after a few stories I was steering toward a Chekhovian or Mannian style. I felt worked in English. Not so with Babel. Each of the 147 texts in this volume, from the shortest story to the longest play, had to be treated on its own terms. Babel is not only one of the greatest storytellers of European literature, but also one of its greatest stylists.

But this claim is rarely borne out in the pages that follow, so one cannot help wondering what, exactly, was the

INDUSTRY OF [illegible]
and
Cannibalization of Time Matrices

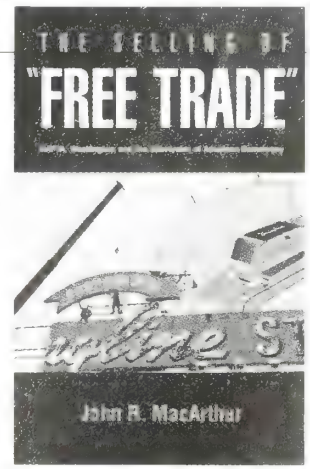


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Yet one need not be a Russian scholar to be troubled by mistakes in simple English usage: "They have been ruined by books, by being forbidden from enjoying a throaty yawn." Overly literal translations often force us to intuit what Babel could have intended; thus when Constantine tells us that "Grandmother had no interest in outside people," we eventually realize that Babel meant something like: anyone outside the family. We understand what the young narrator of "First Love"—one of Babel's greatest stories—is seeing when he ogles his lovely neighbor: "Beneath the lace of her low-cut chemise I could see the deepening onset of her pressed-
and notably unsexy, in English. Similarly, we cannot help wondering: what, precisely, is "pudgy skin"? Or a face "naively powdered"? Or "bouncing false teeth"? Or "destitute pride"? Or what it means to call someone a

The infelicity of such phrases is compounded when they are combined in awkward sentences—con-
without misrepresenting the original.

And what can we conclude about a
"The brothers sat on the bench trying to figure out how old their papa was, and how long the hidden tail of years behind his admitted sixty might be, and Semyon, the janitor's son, was sitting next to them."

What's more troubling is Constantine's shaky attempts to reproduce the poetry of Babel's work, in particular his signature propensity for juxtaposing moments of horrific violence with sections of the most gorgeous lyricism. One such interlude occurs in the first story in *Red Cavalry*, a tale we have come to know as "Crossing into Poland," but which Constantine calls—doubtless more accurately, if less majestically, memorably, or pronounceably—"Crossing the River Zbrucz." This is how we are used to reading the passage, in Morison's version: "Silence overcame all. Only the moon, clasping in her blue hands her round, bright, carefree face, wandered like a vagrant outside the window." And this is how Constantine translates it: "Everything has been killed by the silence, and only the moon, clasping its round, shining, carefree head in its blue hands, loiters beneath my window." Likewise, the story's second sentence, which delivers the first of the many small shocks that
had left Krapivno, and our baggage train was spread out in a noisy rearguard over the highroad from Brest to Warsaw built by Nicholas I upon the bones of peasants" is now longer, more diffuse, and considerably less

No one could fault Constantine's command of Russian, but he appears to lack an ear for the grace of the English language. Oddly, he seems unaware that rhythm and cadence is as important in prose as in poetry, especially at the end of a story (imagine the conclusion of James Joyce's "The Dead" deprived of its musicality) and, most crucially, at the end of Babel's stories, which produce their effect—their ghostly, resonant silence—precisely through the effects of metered sound. Two of his masterpieces, "Crossing into Poland" and "The Sin of Jesus," end with lines of dialogue that remain unanswered—and therefore seem to echo beyond the final page. By changing just a few words, Constantine makes the question asked by the daughter of a murdered man in "Crossing into Poland"—"I should wish to know where in the whole world you could find another father like mine?"—less agonized and searing: "I want you to tell me where you could find another father like mine in all the world!" Likewise, Arina's upbraiding of Jesus (quoted above) now sounds more like petulance than cosmic malediction: "I will not forgive you, Jesus Christ! I will not!'" The astonishing closing lines of so many of Babel's stories now seem clunky and maladroit, including, as it happens, the end of "My First Goose." The line "my heart, stained with bloodshed, [illegible] ed and brimmed over"—which I heard, in that classroom, more than thirty years ago and have never gotten —has now become the graceless: "my heart, crimson with murder, screeched and bled."

What makes this all the more distressing is the fact that Isaac Babel was famous among his contemporaries as a maniacal perfectionist, a fanatically careful and exacting stylist who wrote dozens of versions of a single story and deliberated over every word. Embedded in his fiction are justly celebrated pronouncements on the importance of prose style. So the narrator of "Guy de Maupassant" muses, "A phrase is born into the world both good and bad at the same time. The secret lies in a slight, almost invisible twist. The letter should rest in your hands, getting warm, and you can only turn it on

t vice. . . . No iron can stab the
a with such force as a period put
ti the right place."

I his memoir, *Years of Hope*, the
vi t writer Konstantin Paustovsky
ls a conversation with Babel
n may well be the most eloquent
cisive disquisition ever written
ne subject of literary revision
) nenting on the twenty-two ver-
n of a single story that Paustovsky
s ted on his desk, Babel says:

ork like a pack mule, but it's my
n choice. I'm like a galley slave
o's chained for life to his oar but
loves the oar. Everything about it
. I go over each sentence, time and
ain. I start by cutting all the words it
n do without. You have to keep your
on the job because words are very
. the rubbishy ones go into hiding
. I you have to dig them out. Repeti-
ns, synonyms, things that simply
n't mean anything. . . . I go over
ry image, metaphor, comparison, to
if they are fresh and accurate. If
u can't find the right adjective for a
un, leave it alone. Let the noun
nd by itself.

A comparison must be as accurate
a slide rule, and as natural as the
ell of tomel . . . I take out all the
rticiples and adverbs I can. . . . Ad-
rbs are lighter. They can even lend
u wings in a way. But too many of
em make the language spineless. . . .
noun needs only one adjective, the
oicest. Only a genius can afford two
djectives to one noun. . . . Line is as
portant in prose as in an engraving
has to be clear and hard. . . . But the
ost important thing of all . . . is not
kill the story by working on it. Or
se all your labour has been in vain.
's like walking a tight-rope. Well,
ere it is. . . . We ought all to take an
th not to mess up our job.

eading this, one can hardly beat
magine how Isaac Babel might
rd the awkwardness, the clichés,
the inexactitude of the language
which he is now being presented
nglish—and to consider the pos-
ility that history has (in this case,
h all the best intentions) found
another way of muting the voice
the "master of the art of silence."

n fact, writers and translators
e "ought all to take an oath not
ness up our job." If translators are
great prose stylists—and why
uld they be expected to be'—
they should be encouraged to work with editors and writers who are; for as the poet Mark Strand has suggested, the ideal is not to translate from one language into another but rather from one writer into another. Eventually, we can only hope, such a

[illegible] and eloquent stories. Anything less is a crime. ■

MORE THAN ECONOMIST

A completed life of John Maynard Keynes

By Nicholas Fraser



Discussed in the [illegible]

John Maynard Keynes: Hopes Betrayed, 1883–1920; *Fighting for Freedom, 1917–1946*. By Robert Skidelsky. Viking, 2001. 576 pages. $34.95

It is possible to spend a lunch with someone, in the course of a marriage, perhaps, or through the rigors of shared incarceration—also as a biographer—that you can no longer know how that person has changed you. This is what Professor Robert Skidelsky appeared to be saying, on a dark afternoon last midwinter, about John Maynard Keynes—the Englishman reckoned to have invented modern economics, and on whom Skidelsky had spent the best twenty-odd years of his adult life, covering 1,700-odd dense pages with words. Professor Skidelsky was small and spry, with John Lennon bifocals and an amiably abrasive, distinctly Keynesian manner. We were sitting on small chairs in a bookshop somewhere in the still shabby vicinity of Bloomsbury, and I counted a dozen of us. The small audience admirably fitted Skidelsky's theme, which was the decline of the old [illegible] the culture of Britain.

Keynes, as his Russian wife, Lydia, remarked, was "more than economist." He stood at the crossroads of the modernist movement, and he moved freely among the competing worlds of Cambridge, Bloomsbury, and the Treasury. But the old, intimate world of the British political and intellectual elite had vanished. Economists hesitated between arcane theory and tipstersm. Political life [illegible] the vulgarities of the tabloid press. It would not [illegible]

[illegible] *The Voice of Modern* [illegible] *Poems*, 23. By [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] was misplaced. Nowadays a life of Keynes, no matter how high-minded, would be read primarily for its quota of Bloomsbury indiscretion. "The culture really is gone," concluded Skidelsky.

As he itemized his own discontents, [illegible] how Keynes and his ideas had circulated in my own life. I first encountered Maynard Keynes in [illegible] on the London tube, between power cuts during a miners' strike. In 1970s Britain, the adjective "Keynesian" came attached to many less than pleasant Establishment things. It described what governments did when [illegible] and extortionate claims from trade unions. For many, the term implied a posture frequently adopted in the interminable British class war: a disposition to surrender, camouflaged by elaborate technical arguments. My own experience of Keynes's work was somewhat different. Much of it, consisting of allusions to forgotten crises or abandoned financial schemes (and the latter were complicated indeed, Keynes proving to be as cranky as many an habitué of Speaker's Corner), I could not decipher. What I did understand left me in awe.

Keynes was most easily taken in small doses, often at his best when provoked by what he saw as some in[illegible] "I agree with everything in this it *not* is [illegible] how he once judged the work of a civ[illegible] Bertrand Russell, for whom Keynes's [illegible] "When I argued with him," Russell noted, with untypical humility, "I felt that I took my life in my hands" and [illegible]

"When the facts change, I change my mind," Keynes is said to have quipped. It is hard to love great and unyielding intelligence. It is also hard to tolerate those who are consistently right while always seeming to change their views. Keynes appeared wholly invulnerable to me, and there was no way that, by reading him, I could improve on his genius. I repeatedly lost copies of Skidelsky's vast, wholly absorbing oeuvre, usually on the back seats of cabs in far-off places. But there was one portion of Keynes's long career in which I began to find some less awesomely protected being. In 1919, Keynes attended the Paris Peace Conference, at the age of thirty-six, as the Treasury's financial expert. Busy with intrigue, he nonetheless recorded the post-Armageddon scene for the benefit of fellow Bloomsberries. This is what he wrote to his former lover, the painter Duncan Grant:

> My dearest Duncan,
>
> It's weeks since I've written a letter to anyone—but I've been utterly worn out, partly by incessant work and partly by depression at the evil round me. I've been as miserable for the last two or three weeks as a fellow could be. The Peace is outrageous and impossible and can bring nothing but misfortune. . . .
>
> One most bitter disappointment was the collapse of my Grand Scheme for putting everyone on their legs. After getting it successfully through the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister and seeing it formally handed to Wilson and Clemenceau, the American Treasury (of whom no more was asked than ours) turned it down flat, as a most immoral proposal which might cost them something and which Senators from Illinois wouldn't look at. They had a chance of taking a large or at least a humane view of the world but unhesitatingly refused to sign it. Wilson, of whom I've seen a good deal more lately, is the greatest fraud on earth.
>
> The weather is very fine. I spent [illegible] I motored to Fontainebleau forest and tried to get to Chartres but was defeated by two punctures to my motor. Do write to remind me that there are still some decent people in the world. Here I could cry all day for rage and vexation. The world can't be quite as bad as it looks from the Majestic.

[illegible] hyperbolically summarized in High Cambridge Bloomsbury camp, was Keynes's life stru[illegible] Raised in philistine Britain, K[illegible] had ample opportunity to ob[illegible] the effects of stupidity. Nothin[illegible] had seen had quite prepared hi[illegible] the prospect of comprehensive [illegible] lusionment. There were more [illegible] lign forces at work than punc[illegible] tires, and they were capable o[illegible] doing us all. It was possible to [illegible] Keynes's life as the account of [illegible] ries of bouts with the enemi[illegible] civilization, often conducted in[illegible] ing light and with resources [illegible] were always inadequate. So Er[illegible] in its particulars, the Keynes [illegible] nonetheless transcended the [illegible] level ironies and pervasive d[illegible] ness of the contemporary Br[illegible] scene. I began to understand [illegible] the half-Russian Skidelsky had [illegible] ed up writing a work on the sc[illegible] a novel cycle by Thomas M[illegible] both an account of the last ce[illegible] through one character and an e[illegible] ration of the triumph and ulti[illegible] extinction of the English idea. [illegible] lesson was more complicated, [illegible] ever. Keynes's life was neithe[illegible] nor ultimately crowned with d[illegible] It was possible, in small thin[illegible] well as large, to prevail agains[illegible] spirit of the world as viewed [illegible] the Majestic. One might, as he [illegible] combine all the arts of skept[illegible] without ever quite ceasing to [illegible] lieve in something.

When he died, in 1946, Ma[illegible] Keynes was given full honors b[illegible] British Establishment. And y[illegible] was never really one of them: K[illegible] was too lacking, like Win[illegible] Churchill, in the often stulti[illegible] characteristic known as "sound:[illegible] and much too conspicuous i[illegible] cleverness. He was the greatest [illegible] nent of the deepest, most disti[illegible] English empirical skepticism. [illegible] was the legacy of a culture in v[illegible] the pursuit of truth was a pri[illegible] value (it was always considere[illegible] Keynes to be the only aim in [illegible] but in which the elaboration of [illegible] ory was seldom considered t[illegible] worth more than its applicatio[illegible] commerce or realpolitik. Into s[illegible] promising an environment, pe[illegible] by politicians resembling the r[illegible] dislikable and moronic Wilcoxe[illegible] picted by fellow King's gradua[illegible]

. Forster, the "puckish" Keynes
l me an irregular, penetrating
gen. Keynes was alternately, and
d etimes at the same time, a lec-
er, a civil servant, a farmer, a
ness consultant, a currency spec-
lator, a university administrator,
formulator and begetter of
ish policy toward the arts, an ed-
and publisher (as well as a
ver), and of course a thinker of
at originality. The many thou-
ds of his letters, lectures, pam-
ets, articles—usually done in
t haste—are, like those of his
temporary Churchill (not only a
t writer but also, unlike Keynes,
ildly successful popular journal-
, testimony to the sheer hard
rk involved in the vocation of
suading people. Most of them are
mfully written.

John Maynard Keynes was born in Cambridge, in 1883, at the high-water mark of British ld supremacy, and on the fringes what the esteemed Cambridge torian Noel Annan called the tellectual aristocracy." His father s a less than wholly successful nomist who took refuge in uni sity administration, and his well- cated mother came from a Non- nformist family. Although Keynes ended Eton College, the most bbish (and probably the best) hool of the day, it was as a schol- f tuition paid for in part by the sthumous largess of the school's naissance founder, Henry VI, at he debated the affairs of the , discovered he was a homosexu- and groveled in mud while play- g the Wall Game with aristocratic nd also frequently homosexual) glish boys. At King's College, mbridge, he read philosophy and ned the exclusive, largely homo- xual Apostles' society, through ich he met and began his tem- stuous friendship with Lytton rachey.

Bloomsbury is by now an over- dden cultural patch. Skidelsky's oks convey all the high gossip one ght require, but they also reveal a ep knowledge of the nuances of itish privilege, knowledge without uch one is helpless to understand Keynes's views. Having myself been educated at Eton, I can vouch for the accuracy of his account. Although a scholar, and thus partially subsidized in what must be the earliest evidence of affirmative action, Keynes became a member of the status ridden Eton Society, known as Pop—a self-electing organization that ran (and continues to run) the school. Its badge of membership was the right to wear Tutsy Kerchey buck clothes. To celebrate George III's birthday, Skidelsky records that the eighteen-year-old Keynes wore "a perfect dove" of a waistcoat. He declaimed a piece of Edmund Burke on Fox (also an Etonian). "His social success was in a way more remarkable than his intellectual success," Skidelsky observes, with the candor of an outsider. "No one in England gets far on brains alone." From a young age Keynes was convinced that he was ugly, but this didn't stop him from enjoying love affairs with other "buggers" from his own social milieu. He was much influenced by the most fashionable philosopher of the day, the now forgotten George Moore, from whom he derived the belief, never wholly abandoned, that the most important thing in life was the "truth" of individual states of mind. Keynes traveled throughout the borderless Europe of his day. He joined, and became bored by, the India Office. He worked hard on what proved to be an unsuccessful work of philosophy. Clever, wayward, half in awe of the official world that he also despised, this is where he stood—at the margin of civilized British life—when the European world was destroyed in 1914.

"We entirely repudiated a personal liability on us to obey general rules," is how Keynes remembered this prewar homosexual Arcadia. "We repudiated entirely customary morals, conventions and traditional wisdom." Keynes's first biographer suppressed his mildly salacious correspondence with Lytton Strachey, and it has become usual, perhaps as a reaction to this, to emphasize his links to Bloomsbury. In reality the relationship was often mutually hostile, not least during the Great War. The Bloomsbury religion consisted

[illegible]

Bloomsbury friends financially, while sleeping with some of them, and they in their turn tended to patronize him. Virginia Woolf's diaries are filled with allusions to Maynard's vulgarity. (She described him once as "a gorged seal, double chin, ledge of red lip, little eyes, sensual, brutal, unimaginative," though she did also acknowledge his "queer imaginative ardour about history, humanity.") The pacifist Bloomsberries abhorred Keynes's war work. They were happy to be found war-exempt jobs (in most cases they became rose gardeners), all the while resenting the fact that Keynes's astonishing financial skills were making the fighting possible. For his part, Keynes remained wholly split in his allegiances. He had temporarily suspended his definition of civilization as a place enabling the cultivation of private taste. But he was also resentful of the corrupt uses to which his talents were put.

Keynes's first and best book, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, was published in 1919. It came to influence thinking about twentieth-century politics as no other book did, with the possible exception of *Mein Kampf*. It is primarily the work of a whistle-blower, dishing the dirt on the collusion between French and British politicians, who in Keynes's view "bamboozled" President Wilson into imposing the harshest peace on Germany. (The book has held up remarkably well, though there are those who now believe that Wilson was not as comprehensively hoodwinked, nor as stupid, as Keynes believed.) Keynes's field of philosophical inquiry was probability, and at Versailles he became exercised by the abhorrent spectacle of a group of aging, frock-coated men either unaware of what they were doing or powerless to avoid doing harm despite ample forewarning. It is not

found in

type. Instead, much to the alarm of the Bloomsberries, he married Lydia Lopokova, a diminutive and wacky ballerina from St. Petersburg (her Keynes was "lanky", "I want to be . . . Economist wrote to her), and lent catastrophic. Between the wars, he to the collapse of the financial system that it had engendered. But he world in a narrow or exclusively thought to have bequeathed to his field a method of analyzing and then nomies, it is as a turned and never

any strict type of narrative, eschewing "general rules" in favor of a lack of presumption regarding the nature physical science or modernist fiction. This led him to reject any notion that the operation of financial markets was moral or necessarily beneficent. But it also caused him to reject Marxist economics, just then becoming fashionable among the British intelligentsia. On at least two occasions in the mid-1920s, Keynes went to Russia, where he was able to meet some of his wife's impoverished relatives. [illegible] Webb referred to without irony as

> How can I accept a doctrine which [illegible] book which I know to be not only sc[illegible]

Communism might perhaps appear morally superior to capitalism, but it would never really do. This did not mean that one should sit by and watch the world go to hell. Keynes believed that capitalism was not merely bad for those who suffered the consequences of poverty or idleness; it also poisoned the minds of its many putters and boosters. What was so inspiriting about the unbridled love of money? Why was the possession of money accorded so much respect, and not the things that could be done with it? "Modern capitalism," he wrote a few years before the gious, without internal union, without much public spirit, often, though not always, a mere congeries of possessors and pursuers. Such a system has to be immensely, not merely moderately, successful to survive." nalysis of the anal-sadistic qualities

of money accumulators, and he gan to immerse himself in the m theories of monetary cranks. some point, he suggested, it migh possible to live comfortably out the cash nexus, but not at the ment. The best thing to do, in meantime, was play the markets, Keynes did so to great effect, plu ng in and out of the franc and and dealing aggressively in Am can dollars.

It was Keynes who advoca Britain's quitting the gold standar 1931, a measure that did bring so relief while earning opprobrium fr advocates of "sound" money. book for which he is best rem bered, *The General Theory of Emp ment, Interest and Money*, is hard read these days, for the simple rea that its prescriptions have been ther wholly adopted or discredited indeed often both. But it is Keyn lack of regard for the money syst that is most striking, and his disd for its central bank practitione who seemed as blind as the statesm whose incompetence he had served in Paris after the war. Key wasn't joking when he said that stead of paying out dole money would have been better for t British government to print a gr number of five pound notes, payi people first to bury them and then dig them up. He began to regard t revival of "business confidence"—t solution most frequently canvass by orthodox minds during the d pression—as a mirage. Whatev caused people to fear the operatio of capitalism could not be remov in a day. Circumstances did n make it likely that entrepreneu would be persuaded to invest a consumers to buy. (Not coincident ly, he had lost a great deal of mon himself by buying on margin.) A yet Keynes—this is important, giv the orthodoxy with which his na came to be associated—never su gested that he possessed all the a swers. What he said, again and agai was that there was no mystery. Ho rendous events could stem from tri ial causes, but they might requi only the most trivial remedies. Ec nomics should be considered in th some light is my other human nam

…we disliked the plot of capital-
… might always think of chang-

…ng the 1930s economics sh…
…power politics as Keynes's pri…
…bject of intellectual interest.
…ng from one conference to an-
…stepping forward to tender ad-
…beleaguered governments,
…occupied a place in the pub-
…gination normally reserved for
…nded tennis players or erratic
…royalty. He wrote open letters
…, though there is no record of
…er the latter took his advice
…dy. At home he was spotted by
…sbury cronies telling house-
…on the newsreels how they
…bjure the thrifty habits of gen-
…is. "In the long term we are all
…" was how he responded to
…who still believed in the ulti-
…beneficent, slow-paced world
…rated by classical economists
…could have said equally well
… in the short run we are still
…life and history are made up of
…runs." Keynes freely spent the
…y he made—on a secondhand
…-Royce and in various not
…y successful artistic ventures of
…in Lydia was often the central
…ation. Less and less appreciated
…Bloomsbury, she and Keynes be-
…the odd couple of the decade.
…'s mots were much appreciated
…eynes. "I had tea with Lady
…" she once remarked. "She has
…ary which she likes to show
…one."

To a new generation of econo-
mists (in particular the
young New Dealers of Wash-
…n) Keynes appeared to offer an
…e hatch from stultification
…yet the applause accorded his
…lt on the status quo was by no
…s unanimous. Was it so wise,
…dox spirits asked, was it indeed
…al, to be thus laying stress on so
…of the less appealing aspects of
…alism? From Wall Street, Rus-
…effingwell of J. P. Morgan ob-
…d that "Keynes and all his
…ol . . . have not the judgment of
…ical men. . . . They are civil ser-
…. They are professors of politi-
…conomy. They are not bankers
…hey are not business men." Op-
position to Keynes among other economists came early on. For the Viennese Joseph Schumpeter, Keynes's advice was "always English advice, born of English problems even when being addressed to other nations." Schumpeter saw Keynes's advocacy of monetary manipulations as a consequence of "the kind of Englishmen" he was—childless, from the *rentier* class, hostile to business, and thus fixated on the short term. (Keynes's homosexuality has frequently been adduced, usually sotto voce, or through the creative use of innuendo, as in instance of his lack of "bottom," to use the bizarre term favored by the English elite.)

Perhaps the most penetrating criticism of Keynes came from Friedrich von Hayek, another Austrian who was then lecturing at the London School of Economics. Hayek had witnessed the catastrophe of state intervention during the hyperinflation of the 1920s. He had his own, purely economic reasons for disagreeing with Keynes, but he also suggested that the Keynes style of liberalism, by increasing the scope of state power, would end by extinguishing the bourgeois freedoms it purported to save. Keynes and Hayek liked each other (they were both collectors of antique books, putting new finds each other's way); but the depth of their disagreement is apparent in Keynes's response to *The Road to Serfdom*, published in 1944. In response to Hayek, Keynes argued that an "unplanned" (i.e., laissez-faire) economy was no longer acceptable because too much unemployment would destroy democracy. The answer, he suggested, in his most English way, was to make sure the Right People stayed in charge.

> Mr. Keynes's planning will be safe if it is in the hands of people who know what they are talking about and are determined to leave room for the traditional skills of commerce. . . . Perhaps it is not quite fair to Mr. Keynes to summarize his state of mind in the words "I'm all right, Jack, you can do what you like with the rest of the world."

Churchill-style planning created a nearly just society, administered by the Great and the Good, in which everyone were [illegible] one. But the [illegible] cigar. But the continuation [illegible] tended to positive [illegible] British discovered in the [illegible] the "Keynesian" postwar period. With the worldwide [illegible] government powers initiated by Hayek's follower Margaret Thatcher, the argument would seem to have gone Hayek's way. But modern economies are planned, in a way that would partly have surprised Keynes. We are not, as Richard Nixon once aptly suggested, all Keynesians now; but it is hard to imagine Alan Greenspan outside the shadow of Keynes. The same sort of moral considerations about power apply today, in relation to the giant companies that have partly replaced governments. Not even Mrs. Thatcher believed that politics could be wholly abolished in favor of "pure" market forces. And no one since Keynes has been able to say quite how, nor indeed to what end, "planning" should be directed. Rather than resolve the question, the end of collectivism has made it more pressing.

In 1937 Keynes suffered a coronary attack. The remaining nine years of his life consisted of a series of wars: against a recurring series of terrible attacks, from which Lydia heroically protected him; against the "bandit states" of Europe; and against the [illegible] Anglophobic wartime culture of Washington. The last of these wars occupies prime place in the third volume of Skidelsky's biography, and it is astonishing to find out how not just Keynes but most of the British wartime Establishment were deluded about the real nature of American power.

Keynes had returned to the Treasury, and once again he conducted life-saving negotiations, this time as an informal but powerful special representative, crisscrossing the Atlantic by plane until the [illegible] of his health obliged him to travel by boat. The Empire was going fast, and Britain had hocked everything in an effort to survive. But Congress (and to a large degree FDR)

mark on Keynes's Middle Way welfare-state image. Yet postimperial [illegible] successful at making or distributing [illegible] not a place which Keynes himself would have found [illegible]

I have often wondered whether my lost, scribbled over, broken-backed copies of Keynes still exist. If they do, I suggest that I and their present possessors should meet. The sort of venue I have in mind is not a gathering of economists and power brokers but a scarred piece of earth in some not-favored half of the world decorated with obsolete totems of capitalism. Here we might discuss not such tedious matters as "the marginal propensity to consume," nor the niceties of "demand management" (questions that probably bored Keynes even as he posed them), but what, exactly, capitalism is for, and whether, as Keynes periodically appeared to hope, it could ever be significantly modified or superseded. In 1927, Keynes set out to describe some sort of ideal society, coming up with an idea that would have appealed to the anti-globalization activists of our day. People would be able to value today over tomorrow, the good over the useful. "We shall honour those who can teach us how to pluck the hour and the day virtually and well, the delightful people who are capable of taking direct enjoyment in things," he said, concluding meanwhile, "We must go on pretending that fair is foul and foul is fair . . ."

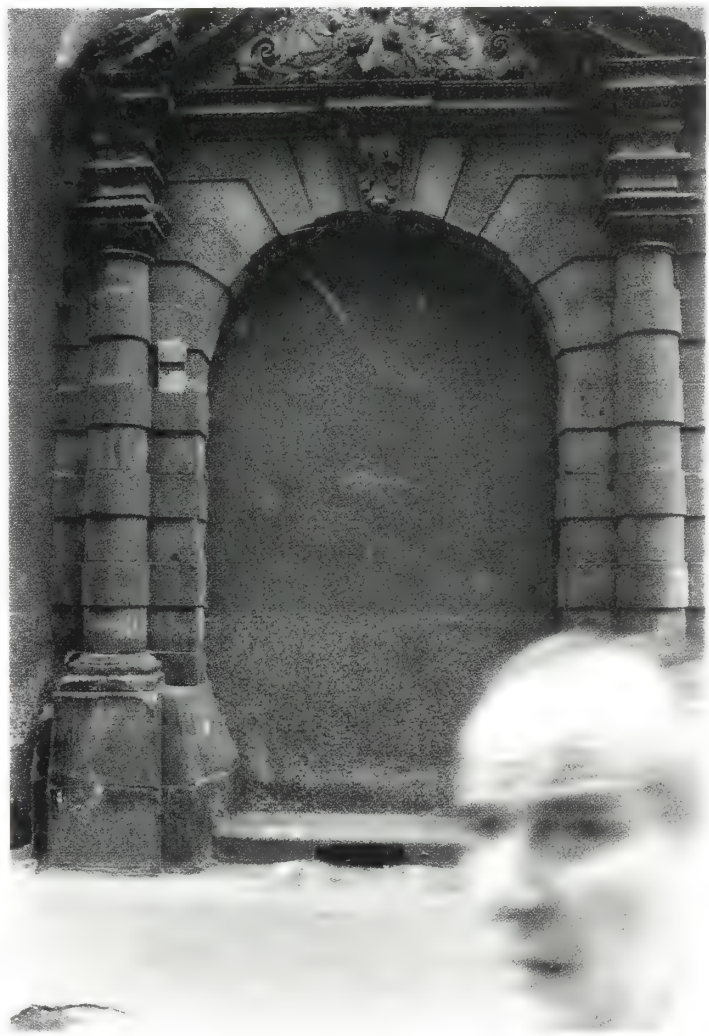
In parts of the planet where the leisure class is securely installed, Keynes's utopia would seem closer to consummation. But raw capitalism has also proved tenacious, evolving its own means of endlessly restimulating consumption even as it convinces us through its many devices, now much refined, that foul is indeed fair. So many deficiencies [illegible] it is even more difficult now to imagine capitalism [illegible] it was in Keynes's day. Keynes wanted to free mankind from the miser's grip, and the contemporary [illegible] capitalist method [illegible]

mediocre in the name of "e[illegible] neurialism," and its brazen te[illegible] tion of waste, indicates that it was indeed disposed to fol[illegible] lead. He warned, again and [illegible] that nothing could be reliably [illegible] pated. "We do not know w[illegible] future will bring," he said, [illegible] that it will be different from [illegible] ture we could predict." Where [illegible] ers might have despaired at s[illegible] uncertainty, Keynes, happily [illegible] rest of us, rejoiced.

The most important thing [illegible] him, surely, is that he never [illegible] to be an economist, despising [illegible] "dismal science" and its prac[illegible] ers, reinventing economics [illegible] it appeared to him that th[illegible] what the world needed. [illegible] would he make of the leg[illegible] well-paid, suited graduates [illegible] job it is to peer into the f[illegible] What would he think of the [illegible] wheeled out on Rupert Mur[illegible] news network to praise the t[illegible] down effect? Or the dot.com[illegible] honaires? Or the many hund[illegible] millions subsisting in conten[illegible] Hoovervilles, dealing in used [illegible] board futures? Of course, Sk[illegible] offers no answers to such que[illegible] but the great thing about thi[illegible] work is that posing them is [illegible] discouraged. Rather than mer[illegible] izing, these books release the [illegible] ject's essence. They tell u[illegible] Keynes's marvelous free-floati[illegible] telligence belongs not in the [illegible] um of British Cultural Studi[illegible] to our own precarious time. [illegible] how I cannot imagine him [illegible] wholly at ease with the cont[illegible] rary scene. Nor can I envisio[illegible] in *rentier* half-retirement, i[illegible] Bloomsbury Carmel or sout[illegible] France, or wherever, set up a[illegible] birther or inglenook restor[illegible] whatever it was that one wa[illegible] posed to do in the hour-plu[illegible] Keynes utopia. He would [illegible] wanted to know—not final[illegible] course, because in such m[illegible] there could be no ultimate [illegible] ment—what capitalism could [illegible] joled into doing for us, all [illegible] Without quite meaning to [illegible] without telling anyone that th[illegible] what he was doing, he might [illegible] be coming up with some answe[illegible]

MY COMMUNIST

By Ron Hansen



I am conscious of the
ps at my English, which
my least language, so
will please correct my
ors. My story is hap-
hing in California dur-
1982. But it is begin-
ng far, far away in my
intry of Poland, where
as born and growing
in Kraków and where I
triculated in philoso-
y at famous six-hun-
d-year-old Jagiellonian
iversity. In fall 1975, I
ve begun four years of
ology studies at Rome's
ntifical Athenaeum of
int Thomas Aquinas,
ich is called "the An-
icum," and, in 1979, I
s ordained a priest for
diocese of Kraków by
former archbishop,
rol Wojtyla, who is
n just a few months Pope John Paul
We have much in common, such as
meland and schoolings, and as
nds it is day of great happiness for
my ordination.

My first parish is in difficult times. We are oppressed country and hard-working people who cannot afford government price increases of sometimes one hundred percent on meats, and waves of strikes for social justice and freedom from Soviet Union have begun at shipyards, railways, bakeries, milking farms. Many priests such as me join the strikers and preside at outdoor masses for many thousands of workers. A revolution, which is called Solidarnosc, is under way, and there is nearly a military invasion by Warsaw Pact countries to "save socialist Poland," but it is halted by interventions from the Pope and warnings from the United States. Even so, priests are kidnapped and murdered to scare and make sad the strikers. In fall 1981, General Wojciech Jaruzelski becamed first secretary of Polish Communist Party, and it is December when he declares state of war in my country. Martial law there is put on us, and many thousands of Solidarity activists without warnings they are being arrested like with Nazis in Occupation.

I can hear the question, "Why this histories?" I will answer the asking in a small while, and you will find out why is necessary.

Also in December it was a bad news that my cardinal archbishop finds out the name of Stefan Nowak

n Hansen's most recent books are the nov-
Hitler's Niece, 1999, and A Stay Against
nfusion: Essays on Faith and Fiction,
01 (both from HarperCollins)

missionary. A big sur

ster me coward. To die like Christ
reading about
Chinese martyrs, so I am prepared to
stay. But also ever since seminary I
countries
where Catholics suffer without the
sacraments. Initially my thinking is
Africa, Latin America, or Russia, but
all missionaries
[illegible] to the Pope

With one week spending in
Chicago city, giving lectures about
and visiting
beautiful churches and museums, I
board an aeroplane for its fly to San
[illegible] in my
life, though I have seen it, naturally,
[illegible] San Fran-
cisco International by the wonderful
old pastor of All Souls' parish, whose
family name when I first heard in
Krakow was sounding very homely
for a man from Poland. Smolarski is
very typical name there. Monsignor
Smolarski asks I address him Joseph
[illegible] new Polish
language. A disappointment. I
promise to teach him some sen-
tences, and songs too, and Joseph
promises to correct my broken En-
[illegible]
in pieces

A
[illegible]
ak in Krakow or Warsaw, but from
[illegible] twenty century. Forty
[illegible] miles south of San Francisco,
[illegible]
[illegible] less, the church has
[illegible]
to my heart Polish.

feel silenced and not as much use-
[illegible] I am

California, so big a state and rich
in different beauties, I like very
much with its weather always in a
good mood and its people friendly
[illegible] not cold or persecuted. The
Mass is familiar even in English,
though I am embarrassed by my
"charming" accent and I am frustrat-
ed to be sounding unintelligent with
homilies too like a child. At first
in my humiliations, as in Italy and
first-year theology.

And such wealth here is horrify-
ing, really. I have a day off and all
afternoon I walk through a gigantic-
proportion supermarket. I have ar-
rived in America with one luggage.
With how many shall I leave? The
both sides of the building seem a
distance of a kilometer as up and
down the aisles I am wandering,
seeing fruits and vegetables even in
winter, so much different foods to
be sold, such plenty, but not want-
ing to buy even a chocolate piece
for thinking of how much people in
my homeland must do without.
And that is when I first see him. In
a gray trench coat, no kidding, and
gray homburg hat, holding a shop-
ping basket in the vegetable aisle
but watching me, for sure, the face
maybe from cousin to Leonid Brezh-
nev, the pig eyes, the slicked black
hair. Weighty. You would not
think *KGB diplomat*. This is herring
man, a favorite to vodka. He is like
to have hammer and sickle tattooed
on his chest. Well, I am making it
[illegible] funny, but it is not so then.
Here for what is this spy? A friend
of mine was found in a northern
forest with a bullet in his brains.
His this tell-a-gun in pocket? Little
hidden camera? Wanting con-
[illegible] I walk, travel, but he is
too fast away. On a bin for green
[illegible] there is [illegible] I can be
has left behind his plastic basket
and inside it are kielbasa, piroshki,
and from delicatessen a carton of
[illegible] Polish Christmas
pudding. My father would buy such
at the market.

Is fat man waiting for me outside?
I do not wish to be surprised in lone-

some place, so I rush opposite
going and push through a stee
I find myself in storing house
a garage door is lifting high ove
as outside a fruits truck backs
horn beeping. I hurry out and
from the dock, and I do no
hurrying until he for sure can
behind me. I say nothing to
signor, for he is old man with
tions of heart.

On Sunday again I notice m
looking hard at Stefan in my
white alb and green stole and
suble after the ten o'clock Mas
the not-yet-thirty priest is sm
because a sweet girl of sixteen
taught herself enough Polish to
"Good morning, Father Now
and it is not so bad, her acce
glance across the street and
Communist is standing in a
circle of shade, for the sun is n
ulous even in March, and he
many clothings and homburg
his hands behind his back
watching me. I am certainly n
amusement to him. I am
hunter's offal, some striker's w
age that must to be removed.
my right hand high. Half a he
it, and half a salute. My spy l
onto his expression, like his fa
inflexible, and then he strolls aw

I find less and less I am afra
weeks go by, and he is around
and then only. I have no ide
thoughts, if he wants me dead,
is KGB and I am only his idle h
his hobby, and his main jobs is
tary secrets. But I have decide
sure he is Polish, and it pleases
whenever he is watching me h
thinking of me in the same lang
that I am thinking of him. I do
care the words he uses.

We are now last week of Ma
and he sends in mailing four p
tographs of me, and back of eac
is labeled in Polish handwrit
"S.N. at local bookstore," "S.N
front of All Souls' rectory," "S
funeral on 20 March," "S.N., h
of Mrs. Kaniecki." Was this to ha
me? Was he just getting rid of?
photos are nice of me. One I sen
parents. Others I hang them in
office.

But I am thinking: I like my p
toral job very much. I have a f

...ay to live in, my first car ever, ...y priests who join us for drinks ...hts at the cinema, invitations ...ners with families, the joy and ...t of my vocation. And how ... could my Communist have? A ...aybe with small television, food ...oks for himself and eats lonely, ...dred worries and secrets, and ...d to pray to? Was I a priest to

> have luxuries while another has so little?

▼

...uth April, quite suddenly he is ...spying on me anymore. I find ...g looking and looking, but he is ... invented him. Poland is still in ...ate of war," and my mailings ... homeland tell of jailings and ...idations, but I seem to be no ...t of interest. I am surprised by ...oss I experience. To "stew and ... is good slang for my feelings. I ...him, this Pole. Has he been re...d to Europe, or is he ill with no ...to help him, or dead with no ...go find him until the smell is ... I pray it is not so.

...first day off, I decide to inves...e. I have habit of visiting a fine ...bookstore in Palo Alto where I read ...ree—please to excuse me, lovely ...owners—their French, Ger..., and Italian newspapers so to ...out more about Poland, which is ...so well covered in America ...y Europeans must do the same, ...ure. I go to very nice woman at ...store counter and describe, "My ...friend whom I have lost touches ...." Smiling, she remembers a ... also with my charming accent ... fits exactly my describing. Os... his name. She thinks he lives ...tar, since he drinks espresso in ...doors café as he reads journals ...mornings. She has not seen this ...r lately.

...et me tell you, are fourteen ...rtment buildings within few ...cks of bookstore. It is quite a job ...me until I figure to go to cheapest ...tments first, for this is Soviet ...m, not CIA. The Spirit is lead...me, for in third place I look I ... his handwriting on the mailbox: ... Sienkiewicz." In Poland a very ...ical name. Weird that I am so ...py, as if I have forgotten evil and ...derous regime.

Up an outside flight of stairs to apartment C, with no signs of life inside. I ring the doorbell many time and shade my eyes to peek through kitchen window, seeing nothing but a heap of dishes. Oskar's bathroom window is frosted glass and like venetian blinds, each cranked open an inch for California air. I look in through slit and find his foot in pajamas as he sits on the bathroom floor, and when I stand taller there are his hands in his lap, and then just a slice of his square head can I make out, tilted toward his right shoulder, some trickles of sickness around his mouth.

"Oskar Sienkiewicz!" I shout, and there is a flutter like he wants to waken. "Are you ill?" I ask in Polish.

He a little nods and answers in Polish, "I'm resting," and just the one sentence in mother's tongue puts me in happiest mood. I walk to the flat's front door, try the handle, and find it is unlocked, no problem. His flat inside is torn furnitures that Monsignor would call "shoddy." Loud on small television is noontime sex opera. On food tray beside a stuffed chair is feast for a hundred flies and a half-full bottle of Polish vodka.

Oskar is on hands and knees on the bathroom floor when I get there. His stink is hard to take, for sure, but I help him stand and he lets me, then my hands he hits away. We speak in Polish from now on. With sarcasm, he asks, "Why aren't you praying?"

"Are you so certain I'm not?"

He falls into the bathroom wall and just there he stays for a while, like he is drunk. But he is ill instead. He recites, "'But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.'" With satisfaction he smiles. "I have the quote right, no?"

"If you meant the Sermon on the Mount."

His forehead he taps. "I'm smart." And then he slides a foot or so until I catch his hot-with-fever weight and heave him to the hallway and onto his bed, it sheets in riot and still wet with night sweats.

[illegible]
not friends," he says, "but I am glad to see you."

"I have news! good!"

"A hard language for outsiders," he says. Oskar squints at me. "I am from Wambierzyce. Have you heard of it?"

"Naturally. It's in Lower Silesia. A shrine to Mary is there."

Oscar falls to his left. "I have to lie down," he says.

Lifting up his white feet, I ask, "Is there anything I can do for you?"

His left forearm covers his eyes as he sighs and gives it some thought. And then he says, "Die."

"I could find a doctor for you. And medicines. Wash your clothes and dishes."

"Were you to die," he says, "that would make me happiest; that would be quite enough."

And that is when I tell him how even in such a terrible times it was to me pleasing to have him around. We shared thousand-year history. Wawel Castle meant to him Rynek Glowny, he knew, is a marketplace. Mariacki Church. The vent of the Vistula River. Hiking in the Carpathians. We are feeling nostalgia for identical things, and for these reasons he could never be my enemy.

With irritation he stares at me. "I was a Catholic once," Oskar says. "But I grew up."

Why that [illegible] to me is not clear, but he is infected by my laughter. I find a spot on the foot of his bed to sit, resting, and he glances at me from under his forearm before hitting his legs to give me more room. "I found the kielbasa you left behind. And the deli cheese—ten cartons of *kutry*," I say. "And I was sure you were a real Polander."

"Oh, say nothing of Christmas pudding! My belly aches for it even now."

"And to stock [illegible]"

Oskar groans.

"And the pastries from that shop by the Jagiellonian."

"Stop it, Stefan, or I shall weep!"

And so I go on naming foods until we both are crying. ■

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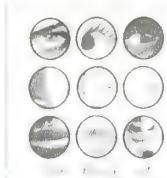
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LETTERS

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Charles Cannon
Emeryville, Calif.

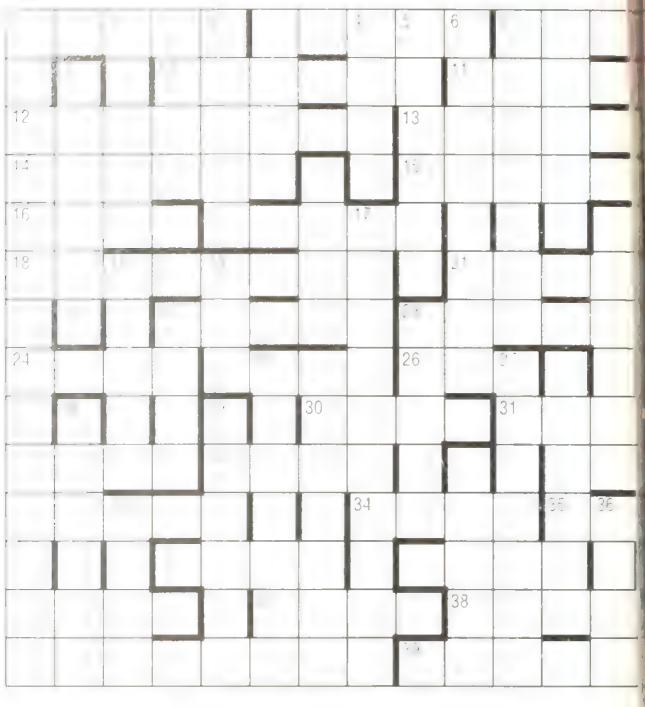
Correction

The September essay by Jacque Barzun, "The Tenth Muse," included, in a sidebar, questions taken from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills exam for the eighth grade. The science question printed was in fact a sample, rather than a scored question, on the test. We regret the error.

November Index Sources

1,2 National Conference of State Legislatures (Washington); 3,4 The Gallup Organization (Princeton, N.J.); 5,6 U.S. Senate Library; 7,8 Selective Service System (Washington); 9,10 Department of Defense; 10,11 U.S. Census Bureau; *Hoof* (London); 11 International Trade Commission (Washington, D.C.); 12 Embassy of Turkey (Paris); 13 Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; 14–16 U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service; 17 United Nations World Food Programme; Latin America (Paris); 18 Federal Immigration Agency (Bern); 19 Vessel Identification System; 20 *Anchorage Daily News*; 21 Mori; Market Research (St. Louis)/Ford Motor Company (Detroit); 22,23 Agency for Nuclear Projects, [illegible] (Mexico City), 24,25 [illegible] Court (Hong Kong); 26 [illegible] (Montreal); 27 National Turkey Federation (Washington)/U.S. Census Bureau; 28 Turtle Island Foods (Hood River, Ore.); 29 New [illegible] Department of Environmental Conservation (Long Island City); 30 [illegible] Edwards Environmental and Mule Wildlife Center; [illegible] 31 U.S. Food and Drug Administration; 32 Multex.com (N.Y.C.); 33 U.S. General Services Administration; 34 [illegible] General Accounting Office; 35,36 Tax Advantage Letter; 37 International Chamber of Commerce (London); 38 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 39 National Park Service (Denver); 40 Department of Conservation Sciences, University of California (Davis)

PUZZLE



B. Member of apocryphal anxious group of

D. Acting troupe circling Italy with no leadership at

I. Entrance in cafe sat in need of repair (9)

One direction that is another direction that is

M. Move in all directions, coming out of anger (5)

37. Darling pet articles returned (4)

39. Box car weight (6)

1. Those who make the moves on others stint on love, game to knock what belongs to a woman (14)
2. Taunts don't begin to spell out veiled threats to bachelors! (5)
3. Worn out, like a car? (5)
4. Endless spot for aspiration (4)

6. Pastries cooked for tramps (8)
7. It may not be true but it makes fit coda (7)
8. Blueprint for good offices (14)
9. Cry out loud for piece of mail (6)
17. Holding onto lease, houses insane inmate (10)

20. Heterosexual and homosexual love—story of my life

22. Man-eater I knew just a bit (4)
25. Way to arrive at higher levels: place sound equipment in a circle (7)
27. Leading small-time nothing loses footing—plucky

28. Watch company acquire First Pennsylvania Holding, industry leader (6)
29. I'm an aristocrat on the way up—but cleaner (3,3)
33. Truly royal trip around the sun (4)
36. Aware of wonton filling (4)

Winners names and

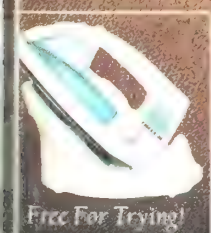
for the September puzzle, "Missing Links," are Linda L. Austin, Bloomington, Indiana;

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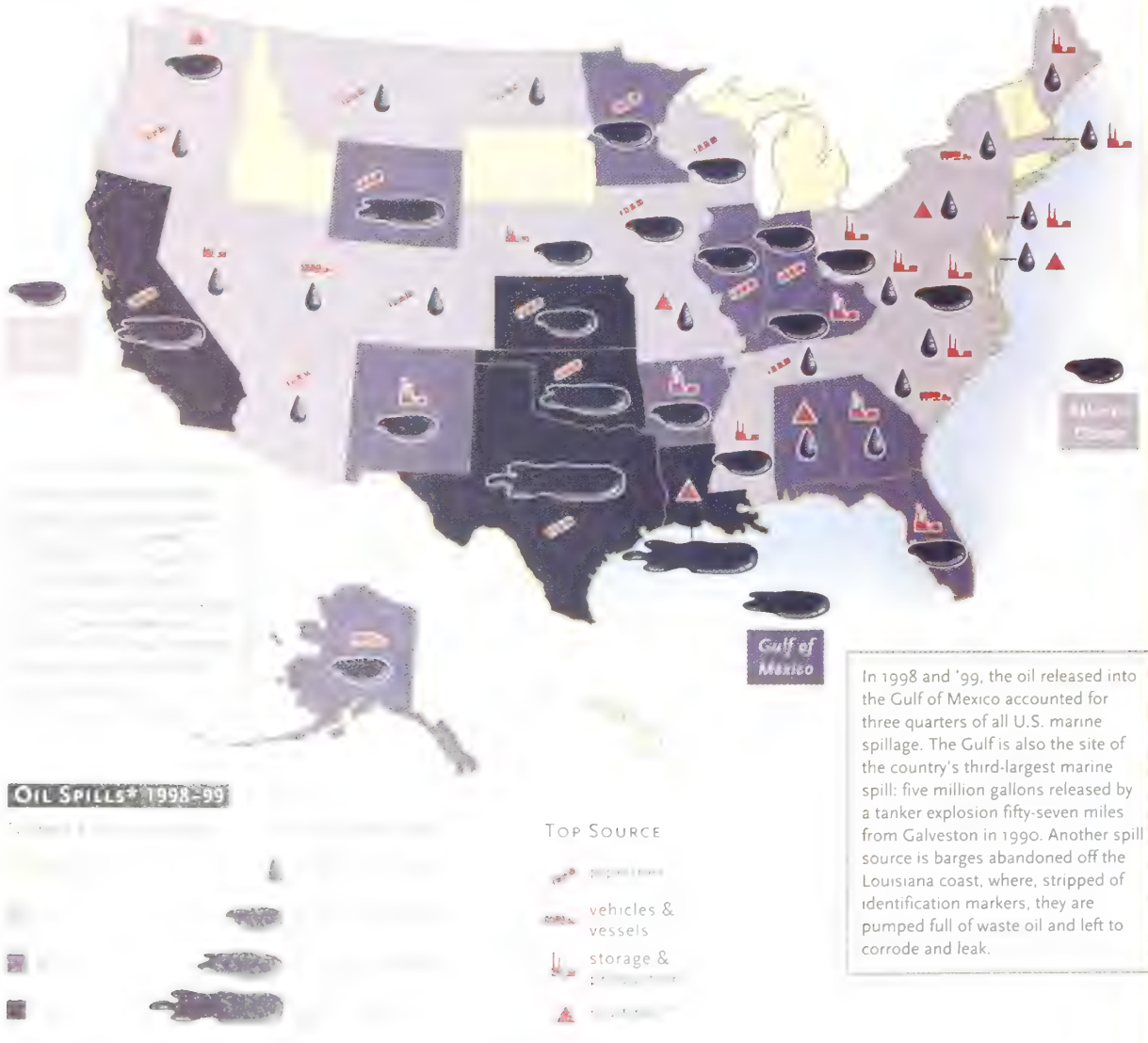
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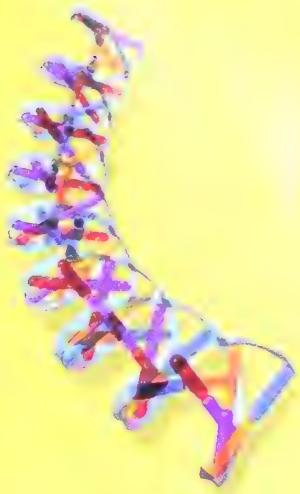
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THE PRICE OF OIL

Like most long-standing addictions, America's dependence on oil is predicated on a fierce denial of the habit's dar
The debatable geopolitical effects of the nation's hunger for oil are phantoms compared to that hunger's concrete
real effects—an annual average of 30 million gallons spilled domestically since 1990—from wells, pipelines, vehicles
storage facilities—resulting in fires, unsafe drinking water, and damage to air, soil, flora, and fauna. Although a dr
domestic oil production—down more than a third since the 1970s—has led to fewer spills in some regions, the
spill-prone part of the industry's infrastructure, its 155,000 miles of active pipeline, reaches every state, some ho
sections many decades old. Corrosion most commonly causes spills from pipelines, as is the case with spills originating in the c
try's 447,000 inland storage facilities. In addition, many spent wells, illegally filled with used fuel oil and left to leak, have been a
dated. Since 1990, companies have been legally liable for damages and cleanup costs associated with their spills, though the gov
ment must often file suit to obtain full compliance. Last year the largest civil fine for environmental violations ever imposed
voked on the country's second-largest private company for damages from more than 300 spills. Faced with corporate intransig
and runaway consumption, the government is concentrating, with mixed results, on cleaner technologies. Those recently touted
the President in connection with new Alaska drilling, for example, have already been malfunctioning there for five years; in a re
state test one platform's newfangled safety shutoff valves had a 33 percent failure rate. Meanwhile, the percentage of foreig
coursing through America's system now exceeds 60 percent, a slippery, self-generated Trojan Horse.



In 1998 and '99, the oil released into the Gulf of Mexico accounted for three quarters of all U.S. marine spillage. The Gulf is also the site of the country's third-largest marine spill: five million gallons released by a tanker explosion fifty-seven miles from Galveston in 1990. Another spill source is barges abandoned off the Louisiana coast, where, stripped of identification markers, they are pumped full of waste oil and left to corrode and leak.



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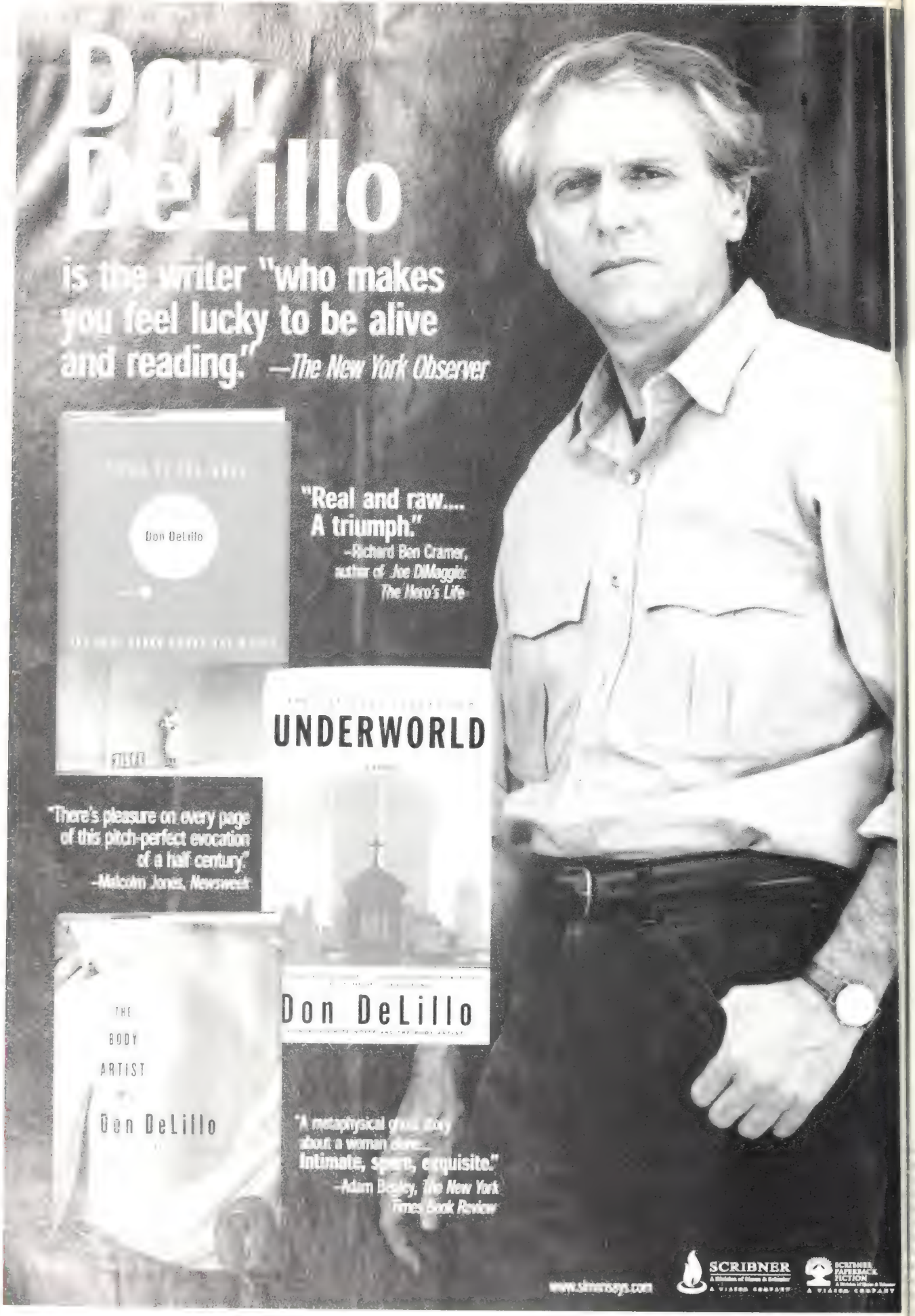
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DECEMBER 2001

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LETTERS

Sexual Ed

Cristina Nehring's ["The Perfect Romance," September] defends personal relationships between professors and students by appealing to the intellectual and creative energies that such relationships unleash. Nehring rightly bemoans the current climate in which fear of sexual-harassment charges is [illegible] the sexual energy of the academy [and, I would add, of the workplace]. "Knowledge," she states, "is unremittingly personal: the best students fall in love with teachers; the most engaged teachers respond ardently and variously to students." Bina Gallop and bell hooks have also written in defense of professor-student relationships. I have [illegible] *Hierophilia*, which Nehring [illegible].

But it's important to note a fundamental difference between my views and those expressed by Nehring, hooks, and Gallop, who provides a [illegible] the erotics of [illegible]. It seems to me that professors and students have no greater [illegible] pleasure, excitement and romance, than lesser mortals—[illegible] certainly, but [illegible] another. The primary ground on which these relationships [illegible] is that of free

[illegible] *Harper's Magazine*, 666 *Broadway, New York, NY*

Short letters are more likely to be published, and all letters are subject to editing. Volume pre-

dom of association between con[illegible]ming adults. This is too important a principle to weaken by self-aggrandizing intellectual justifications—not because Heloise and Abelard, Arendt and Heidegger were [illegible] they were that they had the right to love each other. Human relationships—including sexual ones involving "asymmetry"—do not need [illegible] justifications. These flatter the [illegible] of the persons so involved while leaving no comparable defense available to people who cannot claim comparison with Socrates or Heidegger.

Love, whether of long or short duration, is, I believe, not a means to an end. So, in fact, is sexual pleasure, for most modern peoples who subsume them under the larger rubric of intellectual or creative achievement is no different than making them subservient to religious or political or economic ends. These desires are a very ordinary part of life and should not be banished from

Daphne Patai
Amherst, Mass.

As an adjunct professor at several New York–area colleges, as well as a longtime graduate student, I [illegible] with interest Cristina Nehring's [illegible]. The demonization of consensual sexual liaisons between teacher and student—by administrators who claim to "know better" about the students' well-being—is, as Nehring argues, wrongheaded and undoubtedly the [illegible] fect of political correctness and [illegible] pervasive misuse. We shouldn't be

s, however, to condemn political
ctness, at least in the case of uni-
rsities' sexual harassment policies,
's quite clear that in the vast ma
y of cases these rules, with all
limitations, are enacted not to
ect the student from her (or his)
ete but rather the professor from
ntual lawsuits. By codifying a pro-
tion of sexual relations between
her and student, the university is
ling a message of warning to its
lty, letting them know that the
ersity will not be held responsible
the consequences of affairs. The
tonizing air of these policies,
efore, is directed not at students,
o may or may not be mature
ugh to make their own decisions
he province of romance, but to
academies themselves, who have
ven clearly that they are not.

th Chasm
w York City

certainly agree with most of
stina Nehring's observations. The
lts of campus efforts to police per-
al interactions and classroom at-
sphere are painfully counterpro-
tive. But Nehring goes too far in
gesting that eroticism fundamen-
ly defines creative student-teacher
ationships. Her interpretation
es part in the recent American
tural trend even as she targets that
nd with her criticism. Nehring's
ws overlook the greater number of
chers who, regardless of their age
sex, attract admiration and deeply
fluence students solely on the basis
their mastery of, enthusiasm for,
l desire to share the wonders of an
demic field of study.

lliam J. Scheick
R. Millikan Centennial Professor
niversity of Texas at Austin
stin, Tex.

ng Me

Although John Adams and David
Cullough's biography of him de-
ve the sort of criticism that
hard N. Rosenfeld supplies ["The
lams Tyranny," September],
senfeld should be careful. To con-
ide that Adams was a monarchist
cause other people said so is not

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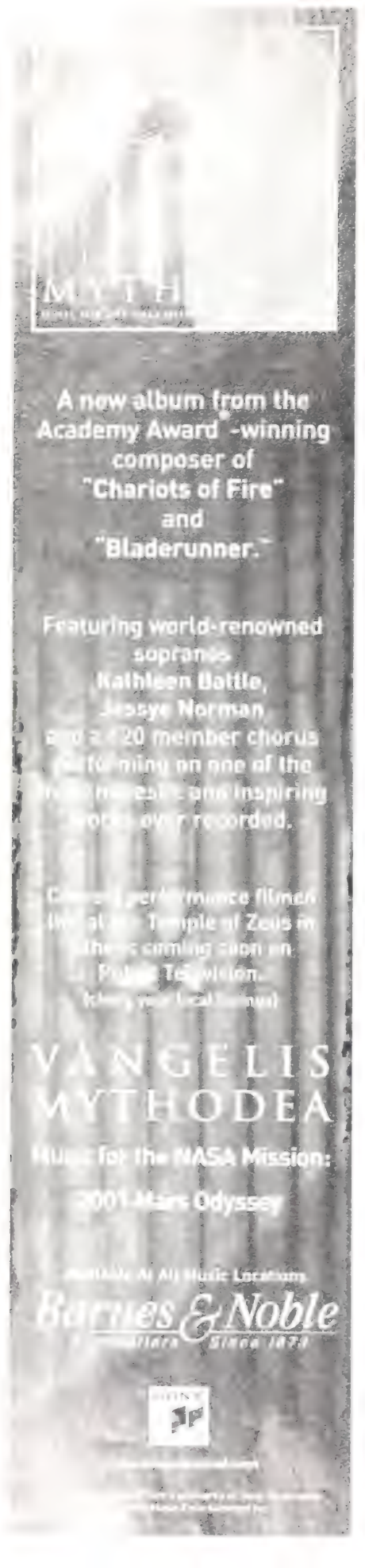
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enough. In the early republic "monarchist" was an epithet tossed [illegible] ist," or "communist" in later years.

[illegible] heirs to inherit the presidency? That [illegible] wanted a policy of property qualifications [illegible] but most states had property requirements until the 1820s, and even the federal Constitution, since it allowed the franchise to be determined by the states, had property qualifications indirectly. Subject Adams and McCullough to criticisms, but they must not be anachronistic.

[illegible]
Professor, History Department
Bowdoin College
Brunswick, Maine

It is perfectly respectable for an individual to be a naysayer, but Richard Rosenfeld goes too far in differing from all the eminent historians who have commended McCullough's *John* [illegible].

Rosenfeld quotes Franklin, Hamilton, Madison, and Jefferson as thinking that Adams was mad. But has Rosenfeld thought to examine the words contemporaries used in speaking or writing about Franklin and Hamilton, let alone Jefferson? The eighteenth century was a time of "plain speaking," and only Washington was relatively immune to the constant criticism politicians (and others) expressed in considering the personalities and policies of their rivals or enemies.

Rosenfeld imagines that Adams's portrayal of Hamilton as "a bastard Brat of a Scotch Pedlar" is revealing of his mean character. Given what others said of Hamilton during his lifetime, Adams's words were tame, almost conventional. Again the reviewer seems unaware of the nature of political rhetoric in the eighteenth century, which changed only with the establishment of mealy-mouthed traditions many years later.

McCullough has written a distinguished biography, comparable in every way to the biography of Truman he wrote almost a decade [illegible]. His work is not hagiography, Rosenfeld contends. McCullough has striven to represent the complexity of diplomacy and politics in the early days of the republic; such subtlety is not what the latter-day self-righteously indignant are prepared to tolerate.

Stephen R. Graubard
Professor of History Emeritus
Brown University
Providence

Richard N. Rosenfeld's review contains at least one misstatement of fact. Rosenfeld begins his final paragraph, "It would take a mighty biographer to place John Adams on a pedestal, and indeed for two hundred years no one has been equal to the task." In the late 1960s, Sherman Edwards and Peter Stone wrote a successful Broadway musical called *1776*, set in the congress in Philadelphia. The hero is neither Jefferson nor Franklin: it is John Adams. The show is remarkable for its historical accuracy; Stone and Edwards quoted from actual letters and diaries of the Founding Fathers, and present compelling portraits of all of them. The Adams is irritable but also smart, articulate, utterly honest, and passionately committed to independence.

[illegible]
Philadelphia

Schoolhouse Knock

As a former New York City public high school English teacher, I found the Forum on education ["School Is a Hill," September] alternately provocative and provoking. Nevertheless, presenting this group of educators from Washington, D.C., New York City, and Boston as visionaries for "American" schools is intellectual provincialism at its worst.

To allow *Harper's* readers to understand that producing "feisty" students with interior lives is a mission the whole culture can share, Lewis Lapham should have gathered educators from, say, Stillwater, Oklahoma; Salt Lake City, Utah; Bettendorf, Iowa; and Bakersfield, California, perhaps at a hearing in North Platte, Nebraska.

Generally, localities get

s they want. That's why pa
nd politicians who gripe about
chools" often give high marks
nearby places their own kids
. The discussion of whether
institutions meet the standards
opes of experts from the north
n suburb corridor makes an in
ing magazine read but, in the
is really only a sideshow. In
places, for most parents, al-
gh they would be loath to ex-
it, the words "education" and
ning" are synonymous, as are
hence" and "socialization." The
f feisty youth with interior lives
rriving and summons up visions
slumbime.

Schools reflect culture; they
t create it. Educators who
d rather be revolutionaries
civil servants are engaged in
eggrandizing romanticism.

Glasser
nor of *Singing on the Titanic*
erhill, Mass.

our magnificent issue on educa-
pays insufficient attention to the
lem of school governance. In
states, including mine, locally
ed school boards have the final
ion on hiring and firing supervi-
and teachers, setting the curricu-
and even selecting the text-
s. There are no qualifications for
g elected to the school board, not
an eighth-grade diploma. Once
n I was serving on my local school
d, we were asked to vote on the
otion of a calculus textbook for an
rs math class. I asked, "Hands up,
of us who has ever taken, let
passed, a calculus course." None
had. It's a good thing our hospi-
re not run this way.

Clark Griswold
erbury, Conn.

n reading the Forum on educa-
I was struck by the similarities
een the teaching and the med-
professions. The evolution, as
ssed in the Forum, of overregu-
on, standardization, etc. that
ks the "feisty" individualistic
her to the detriment of our edu-
nal system is also happening in
icine. Besides the intense train-
ng to juitements and stressful work
loads, we have excessive documenta-
tion, unnecessary certification, and
decreased respect and pay. It is no
surprise that recruitment of feisty in-
dividuals is decreasing in our field as
well. I see the possibility for doctors
and teachers to unite on some level.
Let's fight the anti-feisty movement
in America.

Chris Sordonski, M.D.
Assistant Professor of Surgery
Mercer University School
of Medicine
Savannah

Boy Soldiers

I am [illegible] Index and [illegible] way it presents social commentary. I must protest, however, [illegible] August Index. In a [illegible] Ariel Sharon's criticism [illegible] for putting fourteen-year-old Arab youths in the front line of the intifada, throwing rocks at armed Israeli police or soldiers, with the fact that Ariel Sharon (and many other Israeli leaders) were in the under-

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NOTEBOOK

Res publica

By Lewis H. Lapham

John Keats

Throughout the month of Octo- [illegible] numerous politicians who came to look upon the face of apocalyptic destruction never failed to see, somewhere behind the veil of rancid and still-drifting smoke, an American phoenix rising from the ashes. None of them pre- [illegible] the miraculous bird, but the metaphor was never far from their thought when they spoke of a renewed sense of national unity and purpose, of democracy regained and liberty reborn, of the American spirit, eagle-feathered and indomitable, shining with the promise of a new day's dawn.

Given the ground on which the speakers stood (a makeshift cemetery in which 5,000 of their fellow citizens lay buried under 1.2 million tons of fallen concrete and twisted steel), it was impossible to doubt the truth of [illegible] intent. What was more difficult to judge was the portrait of the future they had in mind. Almost as soon as they had said that America never again would be the same, they began to talk [illegible]

ing, possibly it was because the destruction of the World Trade Center also obliterated most of the supporting theory that for the last twenty years had buttressed the American claim to an advanced state of economic and political enlightenment. As construed by the household sophists in the Reagan Administration and endorsed by their successors in the Bush and Clinton administrations, the intellectual foundation for the country's wealth and happiness rested on four pillars of imperishable wisdom:

1. Big government is by inclination Marxist, by definition wasteful and incompetent, a conspiracy of fools indifferent to the welfare of the common man. The best government is no government. The agencies of big government stand as acronyms for overbearing bureaucracy, as synonyms for poverty, indolence, and disease.

2. Global capitalism is the eighth wonder of the world, a light unto the nations and the answer to everybody's prayers. Nothing must interfere with its sacred mysteries and omniscient judgment.

3. The art of politics (embarrassingly human and therefore corrupt) is subordinate to the science of economics (reassuringly abstract and therefore perfect). What need of political principle or philosophy when it is the money markets that set policy, pay the troops, distribute alms? What need of statesmen, much less politicians, when it isn't really necessary to know their names or remember what they say?

4. History is at an end. The new world economic order vanquishe last of the skeptics by refuting th lacy of Soviet Communism. H reached the final stopping place road to ideological perfection, ma no longer need trouble itself wit new political ideas. Francis Fuku an author much admired by the *Street Journal*, summed up the pr tion in a sentence deemed sub "For our purposes, it matters very what strange thoughts occur to p in Albania or Burkina Faso. . . "

All four pillars of imperishable dom perished on the morning of tember 11, reduced within an ho the incoherence of the rubble in erty Street. By noon even the tru true believers knew that they had telling themselves a fairy tale. If n big government, then where els the friends of laissez-faire econo look for the rescue of their fina and the saving of their lives; if no agencies of big government, who brought the ambulances from a away as Albany or sent the fire into the doomed buildings wit promise of a finder's fee? It wasn't free market that hijacked the airpl and cross-promoted them into bo or Adam Smith's invisible hand cut the throats of the pilots on v they thought was a flight to Angeles. History apparently was st work in progress, the strange thou grown in the basements of Tirana sibly closer to the geopolitical spir the times than the familiar platitu handed around the conference ta at the American Enterprise Instit

By nightfall the revelation was c

e., and during the weeks since Sep-
ber 11 the rush into the shelters of
government has come to resemble
rowding of sinners into the tent of
ne evangelist. The corporate lob-
ts make daily pilgrimages to Wash-
on in search of federal subsidy, the
Force bombs Afghanistan; the
te House and the State Depart-
t revise the terms of our diploma-
ith Russia, Pakistan, Saudi Ara-
Israel, and China; the FBI sets up
lefenses against the airborne spores
f anthrax, and the once-gaudy adver-
sements for what was variously billed
s the globalist hegemony and the new
rld economic order begin to look
faded circus posters peeling from a
side billboard in eastern Tennessee.
ry morning's paper and every
ning's television broadcast punch
w hole in the old story, and it turns
that public service on behalf of the
mmon good (as recently as last Au-
th ought no longer fashionable or
minent) retains at least the memory
an honorable meaning. Mayor
olph Giuliani in New York gives
ce to the city's courage, and among
electorate formerly presumed deca-
nt the discovery of such a thing as an
merican commonwealth finds ex-
ssion not only in the show of flags
also in the myriad voluntary acts of
izenship—unpaid rescue workers
during the wreckage in lower Man-
tan, $850 million in emergency
ds contributed by individuals as well
corporations, the news media ac-
ting substantial loss of advertising
venue in order to provide more time
d space for the discovery of maybe
essary information, a generous up-
ling of tolerance and compassion
ng people of different colors, their
rd for one another grounded in the
ognition that the modifying adjec-
es (black, gay, white, native, etc.)
matter less than the noun
American.

By the end of October it had been
nerally understood that America no
nger enjoyed a special arrangement
th Providence, preserved by the
tue of its inhabitants and the grace
its geography from the provocations
death, chance, kings, and desper-
men. Confronted with determined
emies (many of them still unknown,



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Senate resolution sold to the highest bidder—for the drilling of the Arctic oil fields or the lifting from the rich the burden of the capital-gains tax, for bigger defense budgets, reduced medical insurance, enhanced surveillance, grotesque monopoly. If we took more of an interest in the making of our foreign policy, usually for the profit of our corporate overlords rather than for the safety of the American people, maybe we would know why, when bringing the lamp of liberty to the darker places of the earth, the United States invariably chooses for its allies the despots who operate their countries on the model of a prison or a jail. We might even wonder why, ten years ago during the denouement of the Gulf War, George Bush the elder chose to leave an army in Saudi Arabia. Did we mean to protect our supply of cheap oil, or were we providing the Saudi ruling family with household troops to preserve them from a revolutionary uprising led by malcontents as clever as Osama bin Laden?

If we mean to project abroad the force of the *res publica* made glorious by the death of American teenagers and Muslim holy men, we might [illegible] better care of our own domestic commonwealth. For the last twenty years we've let fall into disrepair nearly all of the [illegible] roads, water systems, schools, power plants, bridges, hospitals, broadcast frequencies—that provides the country with a foundation for its common enterprise. The privatization of the nation's public resources has enriched the investors fortunate enough to profit from the changes of venue, but [illegible] well-being? The lopsided division of the country into the factions of the hapless many and the privileged few has allowed our faith in the republic to degenerate from the strength of a conviction into the weakness of a sentiment. By discounting what the brokers classify as "non-market values," we're left with a body politic defined not as the union of its collective energies and hopes but as an aggregate of loosely affiliated selfish interests (ethnic, regional, commercial, sexual), armed with their own manifestos, loyal to their own [illegible] das, secure in the compound[illegible] their own languages. Democracy [illegible] derstood as a fancy Greek nam[illegible] the American Express card and [illegible] Norman Mailer's Christmas [illegible] logue, the government seen [illegible] Florida resort hotel, its assortme[illegible] goods and services deserving o[illegible] spect in the exact degree to whi[illegible] satisfies the whims of its patrons[illegible] meets the expectations of con[illegible] and style at both the [illegible] count and holiday rate[illegible]

As was proved by events [illegible] morning of September 11, the [illegible] sez-faire theories of governmen[illegible] us an injustice. They don't spe[illegible] the best of our character; neithe[illegible] they express the cherished ideal[illegible] bodied in the history of a courag[illegible] people. What joins the Ameri[illegible] one to another is not a commor[illegible] tionality, race, or ancestry but [illegible] voluntary pledge to a shared wo[illegible] both the moral and political ig[illegible] nation. My love of country fol[illegible] from my love of its freedoms [illegible] from pride in its armies or its fl[illegible] and I admire the institution[illegible] American government as useful [illegible] well-made tools (on the order [illegible] plow, an axe, or a surveyor's pl[illegible] line) meant to support the libe[illegible] of the people, not the ambitior[illegible] the state. The Constitution serv[illegible] the premise for a narrative ra[illegible] than as the design for a monun[illegible] or a plan for an invasion.

Any argument about the di[illegible] tion of the American future [illegible] comes an argument between [illegible] past and present tense. Let us [illegible] that it proves to be both angry [illegible] fierce. The friends of the status [illegible] (both houses of Congress, mo[illegible] the national news media, the H[illegible] wood patriots, and a legion of [illegible] porate spokespersons) already [illegible] made it clear that they prefer as[illegible] tle discussion as possible. Dome[illegible] political dissent they regard as [illegible] moral and, in time of war, trea[illegible] ous. They believe it their dut[illegible] invest President Bush not only [illegible] the powers of a monarch but [illegible] with the attribute of wisdom. [illegible] out more flags, post more gua[illegible] distribute the pillows of ca[illegible]

e two or three years from now,
all the terrorists have been
led up and the Trade Center
s replaced with a golden statue
mmon, the time will come to
of politics. In the meanwhile,
, hilchen, while waiting for that
t happy day, follow directions,
Eat to the surveillance, look at
once pictures brought to you by
Pentagon, know that your rulers
rise.

sayeth Trent Lott and *Time*
azine, and the admonition
s to me as feckless as the theory
supported last summer's pillars
perishable wisdom. The coun-
t the moment stands in need of
many questions as anybody can
k to ask. Rightly understood,
ocracy is an uproar—nothing
t, orderly, or safe—and among
the American political virtues,
lor is probably the one most
essary to the success of our
ed enterprise, unless we try to
one another the truth about
t we know and think and see,
might as well amuse ourselves
as long as somebody else allows
do so) with Steven Spielberg
ies.

Alfred North Whitehead once ob-
ed that it is the business of the
re to be dangerous (not because
future is perverse but because it
sn't know how to be anything
), and whether we like it or not,
argument now in progress in
scow and Jerusalem and Islam-
d is the same argument that en-
ned the annals of republican
me, built the scaffolds of the
nish Inquisition, and gave rise to
American Revolution. If we fail
ngage it, we do so at our peril.
freedoms of expression present
ocratic societies with the unwel-
e news that they are in trouble,
because all societies, like most in-
duals, are always in some kind of
ible, the news doesn't drive them
o the reefs of destruction. They
instead from the fear of thought
the paralysis that accompanies
wish to believe that only the
ked perish. The climate of anxi-
is the cost of doing business, dis-
nfort the state of mind in which
oyster brings forth the pearl. ■



The holidays draw close. Here in Tain, we are labouring day



A dense chill overtakes the Highlands each year at this time. Our dog grey [illegible] twilight out of each 24. Still just across the firth our houses [illegible] glow with light, brighter on the worst incense of slowing [illegible]

For the sixteen men who make their living at the Glenmorangie, and for our families and friends, this is a season of celebration. As you might imagine, our Highland malt enjoys great popularity at local holiday gatherings. Arriving with a bottle in hand is the most reliable means we have found for coaxing a warm smile and warm welcome at the doorstep.

Reports from abroad suggest that Glenmorangie (pronounced GlenMORangie, as if trying to rhyme with ORANGEY) produces a similarly enthusiastic response at celebrations outside of Scotland.

We invite you to join us in this tradition of holiday giving and find out for yourself.



The [illegible] Mountain

GLENMORANGIE

SINGLE HIGHLAND MALT SCOTCH WHISKY

Please [illegible] whisky [illegible]



ENGINEERED TO BE ALMOST PSYCHIC.

Introducing a car so technologically advanced, it can sense trouble and begin to adjust for it before the driver even notices that there's a problem. It's the 6-cylinder 212-horsepower Outback VDC from Subaru. The VDC stands for Vehicle Dynamics Control, a highly intelligent stability system that rivals those found in vehicles costing thousands more.

Using a sophisticated series of sensors, VDC can help prevent loss of control due to oversteer, understeer, wheel spin or vehicle drift. The instant a difference is detected between the driver's intended direction of travel and the path the car is actually taking, VDC takes corrective action. Momentary brake [illegible] to individual wheels. The All-Wheel [illegible] amount of power between the wheels. Even the engine's output may be momentarily reduced. Before the driver even realizes that loss of control is impending, any or all of these measures may be applied automatically to help restore directional stability. It's almost as if the car has a sixth sense.

In fact, in every sense the Outback VDC is a remarkable vehicle. It even features a state-of-the-art 200-watt* sound system built exclusively for Subaru by McIntosh®. With 11 speakers placed in 7 strategic locations, the audio quality has been specifically tuned to the car's unique acoustics.

The Outback VDC from Subaru. Truly a phenomenon in the world of automotive engineering. To find out more, visit us at **www.subaru.com**.

SUBARU

The Beauty of All-Wheel

HARPER'S INDEX

Date on which the first contract for a book about September 11 was signed : 9/13

e on which the results of a 13-member major-media consortium's 2000 election recount were to be made public : 9/24

ays before this that the *New York Times*, a consortium member, declared the unreleased results "utterly irrelevant" : 1

Number of consortium members that ran a news story on their decision to delay publicizing the results indefinitely : 0

Number of minutes of network news coverage devoted to Colombia in the month following September 11 : 2

age on which the *New York Times* reported the EPA's 7-year extension of genetically modified corn sales last fall : C6

Chance that a "GMO-free" food product studied last April contained no genetically modified ingredients : 1 in 5

Percentage of Chicago sushi chefs who are of Japanese descent : 29

Percentage who are of Mexican or Ecuadoran descent : 30

ce per family that a Puerto Rican company charged last December for a 5-minute stay in a refrigerated snowscape : $30

nber of mimes Guatemala's transit department hired last April to administer driver "education" at busy intersections : 20

Price of a 12-hour do-it-yourself anger-management course from an online vendor : $165

Total number of bids placed on Bidforsurgery.com since last year : 12,600

Estimated number of inquiries the site has received about open-heart surgery : 35

Minimum number of anthrax hoaxes reported in the United States in the three years before September 11 : 175

Number of members of the rock band Anthrax who say they are hoarding Cipro so as to avoid an "ironic death" : 1

Years after Ernest Hemingway killed himself that his transsexual son died last fall in a Miami women's jail : 40

Percentage change since 1994 in the number of boys on competitive U.S. high school cheerleading squads : +470

Percentage change between 1998 and 1999 in the number of women construction workers : +36

Ratio of New York City welfare recipients whose benefits ended this year to the number of police officers there : 1:1

Total new tax cuts for U.S. businesses approved by the House of Representatives in October : $146,000,000,000

tio of the projected cost of General Electric's dredging of its PCBs from the Hudson River to its total profits last year : 1:280

Earliest year in which the dredging might begin : 2004

Percentage change since 1980 in federal funding for research on renewable energy sources : –83

Estimated percentage of U.S. electricity demand that could be met by covering the nation's roofs with solar panels : 27

Maximum number of gallons of oil stored under the World Trade Center on a given day : 86,000

Estimated number of mock commando raids on U.S. nuclear-weapons facilities that have been staged since 1995 : 100

Minimum number that succeeded in breaching security : 50

Minimum number of cats fitted with high-tech listening equipment in a 1967 CIA project : 1

Estimated number of minutes after the cat was released on its first test run that it was killed by a taxi : 10

Estimated amount Cleveland has spent in the last two years fulfilling Y2K-protection contracts : $11,000,000

Months after the millennium that Dublin plans to complete the erection of its 394-foot Millennium Spike : 20

Internal code number the British census has assigned to citizens who cited their religion as "Jedi Knight" : 896

Number of Montreal stores vandalized last year for mounting Christmas displays in November : 14 (see page 16)

Ratio of businesses to military sites attacked by international terrorists between 1995 and 2000 : 38:1

Chance that a death caused by international terrorism during that period occurred in Asia : 1 in 2

Number of the world's ten tallest buildings that are in Asia : 8

Number of Manhattan buildings destroyed in the fire of 1835 : 674

Number of deaths that resulted : 2

Number of years since 1776 in which no nation was at war : 0

Figures cited are the latest available as of October 2001. Sources are listed on page 72.
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Winter Reading

THE BLACK FEMALE BODY
A Photographic History

Deborah Willis and Carla Williams

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and full color photos, this lavishly illustrated book is the photographic image of the stunning array of familiar and many virtually unknown photographs, *The Black Female Body* shows how photographs reflected and reinforced Western culture's fascination with black women's bodies. Makes an exceptional gift book and keepsake.

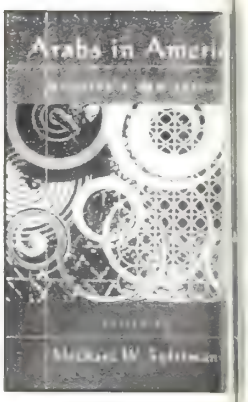
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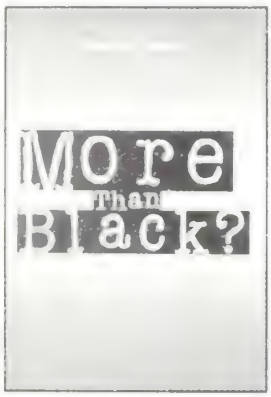
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This collection of essays takes a close look at the status of Arabs in North America—from their cultural contributions to their struggles for recognition and acceptance.

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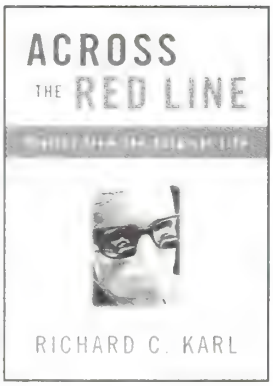
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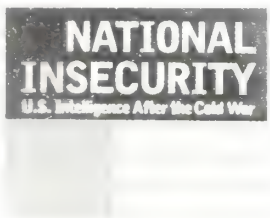
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READINGS

[Essay]

WHERE THERE IS NO COMMON POWER

The following essay by John Gray appeared in the [illegible] *most recent book is* Two Faces of Liberalism.

[illegible] ers will be remembered as an era of delusion. The West greeted the collapse of Communism [illegible] ideology—as the triumph of Western values. The end of the most catastrophic utopian experiment [illegible] toric opportunity to launch yet another vast utopian project [illegible] market ideology that was as far removed from [illegible] after the attacks on New York and Washington, the conventional view of globalization as an irresistible historical trend has been shattered. We are back on the classical terrain of history, where war is waged not over ideologies but over religion, ethnicity, territory, and the [illegible]

We are in for a long period—not months but years, perhaps decades—of acutely dangerous conflict. It will be a type of conflict with which many regions of the world are all too fa- [illegible] conceptions about war and peace. Its protagonists [illegible] tions whose relationships with governments [illegible] and the World Trade Center, using box cutters [illegible] diers in a new kind of war.

A monopoly of organized violence is one of [illegible] achieved slowly and with difficulty. Now war, [illegible] has slipped out from the control of governments [illegible] tonishing speed over the past decade. The world is littered with collapsed states. In much of Africa, in Afghanistan, in the Balkans, and in a good deal of Russia, there is nothing that [illegible] manded by political and religious organizations, often clan-based and prone to savage internecine conflicts. No power is strong [illegible]

The results expose the weaknesses and contradictions of the global free market constructed after the Cold War. Rich societies cannot be insulated from the collapsed states and new forms of war. Asylum seekers and economic refugees press on the borders of every advanced country. But while trade and capital move freely across the globe, the movement of labor [illegible] tairs from the late nineteenth century. [illegible]

irregular armies of the world's most collapsed heart of its richest and most powerful state.

Their brutal coup is an example of what military analysts call "asymmetric threat"—in other words, the power of the weak against the strong. What it has shown is that the strong are weaker than anyone imagined.

This powerlessness of the strong is not new. It has long been revealed in the futile "war" on drugs. The trade in illegal drugs is, along with oil and armaments, one of the three largest components of world trade. Like other branches of organized crime, it has thrived in the free-for-all created by financial deregulation. The world's richest states have squandered billions on their crusade against a highly globalized and fabulously well-funded industry. Rooting out terrorism will be even more difficult. After all, most of the worst effects of the drug trade can be eradicated simply by legalizing drugs. There is no parallel remedy for terrorism.

The atrocities in Washington and New York did more than reveal the laxity of America's airport security and the limitations of its intelligence agencies. It inflicted a grievous blow to the beliefs that underpin the global market. In the past, it was taken for granted that the world will always be a dangerous place. Investors knew that war and revolution could wipe out their profits at any time. Over the past decade, under the influence of ludicrous theories about new paradigms and the end of history, they came to believe that the worldwide advance of commercial liberalism was irresistible. Financial markets came to price assets accordingly. The attack on the World Trade Center may accomplish what none of the crises of the past few years—the Asian crisis, the Russian default of 1998, and the collapse of Long-Term Capital Management, an over-leveraged hedge fund—was able to do. It may shatter the markets' own faith in globalization.

Some people say that this was the purpose of the attack, and that we would be craven to give in to it. Instead, we are told, we must reassert the verities of the global free market and seek to rebuild it. And, with luck, it may not be too late to stave off worldwide recession. But the name of the game has changed forever. The entire view of the world that supported the markets' faith in globalization has melted down. Whatever anyone tells you, it cannot be reconstituted. The wiser course is to ask what was wrong with it.

It is worth reminding ourselves how grandiose were the dreams of the globalizers. The entire world was to be remade as a universal free market. No matter how different their

YOU BETTER WATCH OUT

The following notice was sent in November 2000 by the group L'Anti Noel Avant L'Temps to merchants in Montreal whose stores were decorated for Christmas. Fourteen businesses that did not comply with the group's request were vandalized. Translated from the French by Jennifer Szalai.

H

continues. Do you agree?

The leaves lie scattered on the soil, the atmosphere is calm and romantic; it is the dead season and many are rejoicing. Right? It is part of a whole season, a beautiful season, and one that does not officially end until the twenty-first of December. Are you listening?

Winter is far off, and Christmas does not exist outside of winter. Christmas=winter. Autumn=tranquillity, peace of mind. You see

We're L'A.N.A.L.T. (L'Anti Noel Avant

and frustrated by your ill breeding. We refuse to let you destroy autumn for a reason as permanent as and disgusting as making a little bit of

coming. You're going to make the same kind of

erything has its time.

We demand that you take down all of your Christmas decorations without delay, and not put them back up until the first of December. It



City, by New York artist Olive Xhoo, whose studio was destroyed on 11 September 2001 at Pioneer Galleries in Brooklyn.

histories and values, however deep their differences or bitter their conflicts, all cultures everywhere were to be corralled into a universal civilization.

What is striking is how closely the market liberal philosophy that underpins globalization resembles Marxism. Both are essentially secular religions, in which the eschatological hopes and fantasies of Christianity are given an Enlightenment twist. In both, history is understood as the progress of the species, powered by growing knowledge and wealth, and culminating in a universal civilization. Human beings are viewed primarily in economic terms, as producers or consumers, with—at bottom—the same values and needs. Religion of the old-fashioned sort is seen as peripheral, destined soon to disappear or to shrink into the private sphere, where it can no longer convulse politics or inflame war.

History's crimes and tragedies are not thought to have their roots in human nature: they are errors, mistakes that can be corrected by more education, better political institutions, higher living standards. Marxists and market liberals may differ on what is the best economic system, but, for both, vested interests and human irrationality alone stand between humankind and a radiant future. In holding to this primitive Enlightenment creed, they are at one.

And both have their dogmatic, missionary side. For market liberals, there is only one way to become modern. All societies must adopt free markets. If their religious beliefs or their patterns of family life make this difficult for them, too bad—that is their problem. If the individualist values that free markets require and propagate go with high levels of inequality and crime, and if some sections of society go to the wall, tough—that is the price of progress. If entire countries are ruined, as happened in Russia during the time of neoliberal shock therapy, well—as an earlier generation of radicals nonchalantly put it—you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.

During the 1990s, this crudely rationalistic philosophy was hugely influential. It had a stronghold in the International Monetary Fund, as it blundered and bungled its way across the world exercising its power to impose identical policies on countries with vastly different histories, problems, and circumstances. There was only one route to modernity, and

no society can ignore for long made it harder to perceive the growing risk of an anti-West-

the United States, the world's richest states have acted on the assumption that people everywhere want to live as they do. As a result, they failed to recognize the deadly mixture of emotions—cultural resentment, the sense of injustice, and a genuine rejection of Western modernity—that lies behind the attacks on New York and Washington.

In my view, it is reasonable to regard the struggle against the groups that mounted those attacks as a defense of civilized values. As their destruction of ancient Buddhist relics demonstrated, the Taliban are hostile to the very ideas of toleration and pluralism. But these ideas are not the property of any one civilization, and they are not even peculiarly modern. In Western countries the practice of toleration owes much to the Reformation and, indeed, to the Enlightenment, which has always contained a skeptical tradition alongside its more dogmatic schools. Beyond Europe toleration flourished long before the modern era in the Muslim kingdoms of Moorish Spain and Buddhist India, to name only two examples. It would be a fatal error to interpret the conflict that is now under way in terms of poisonous theories about clashing civilizations.

Effective action against terrorism must have the support of a broad coalition of states. Crucially, these must include Muslim countries (which is one reason why American military action must entail new attempts to seek peace in Israel). Not only Russia and China—each of which has serious problems with Islamic fundamentalism—but even Iran could conceivably join in a U.S.-led coalition.

Constructing such a far-reaching alliance will be an exercise in realpolitik in which ideas of global governance of the kind that have lately been fashionable on the left become largely irrelevant. The United States will find itself supping with former enemies and courting states that are in no sense committed to liberal values. In waging war against the Taliban, it will do battle against a force it backed only a few years ago to resist the Soviet invasion. Such ironies can no more be conjured away by international courts than by global markets. They are built into an intractably disordered world. Bodies such as the United Nations can play a useful role in the labyrinthine diplomacy that inevitably surrounds military action. But anyone who thinks that this crisis is an opportunity to rebuild world order on a liberal universalist model has not understood it. The ideal of a universal civilization is a recipe for unending con-

McSTAKES WERE MADE

that, and it is time it was given up. What is urgently needed is an attempt to work out terms of civilized coexistence among cultures and regimes that will always remain different.

Over the coming years, the transnational institutions that have built the global free market will have to accept a more modest role, or else they will find themselves among the casualties of this great upheaval. The notion that trade and wealth creation require global laissez-faire has no basis in history. The Cold War—a time of strict controls on capital and extensive intervention in the economy by national governments—was, in Western countries, a time of unprecedented prosperity. Contrary to the cranky orthodoxies of market liberals, capitalism does not need a worldwide free market to thrive. It needs a reasonably secure environment, safe from the threat of major war, and reliable rules about the conduct of business. These things cannot be provided by the brittle structures of the global free market.

On the contrary, the attempt to force life everywhere into a single mold is bound to fuel conflict and insecurity. As far as possible, rules on trade and the movement of capital should be left to multilateral agreements between sovereign states. If countries opt to stay out of global markets, they should be left in peace. They should be free to find their own version of modernity, or not to modernize at all. So long as they pose no threat to others, even intolerable regimes should be tolerated. A looser, more fragmented, partly de-globalized world would be a less tidy world. It would also be a safer world.

It will be objected that de-globalization defies the dominant trend of the age. But although it is true that technology will continue to shrink time and distance, and in that sense link the world more closely, it is only a bankrupt philosophy of history that leads people to think that technology will produce convergence on values, let alone a worldwide civilization.

New weapons of mass destruction can—and quite possibly will—be used to prosecute old-style wars of religion. The Enlightenment thinking that found expression in the era of globalization will not be much use in its dangerous aftermath. Even Hobbes cannot tell us how to deal with fundamentalist warriors who choose certain death in order to humble their enemies. The lesson of September 11 is that the go-go years of globalization were an interregnum, a time of transition between two epochs of conflict. The task in front of us is to forge terms of peace among peoples separated by unalterably divergent histories, beliefs, and values. In the perilous years to come, this more-than-Hobbesian labor will be quite enough to keep us occupied.

[Accounts]

AND NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR

The following testimony was taken from interviews with plaintiffs in a lawsuit filed in June against Exxon-Mobil for complicity in human-rights abuses committed by Indonesian military forces, the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), whom Exxon-Mobil hired to protect its natural-gas operations in the Aceh province, where a separatist rebellion has been ongoing for twenty-five years. The suit, brought by the International Labor Rights Fund, contends that Exxon-Mobil provided barracks where victims were tortured and heavy equipment that was used to dig mass graves. TNI Unit 113 was specifically stationed to the Exxon-Mobil facility near the town of Lhokseumawe. Exxon-Mobil released a statement categorically rejecting the allegations. In the last decade, 6,000 people, mostly civilians, have died in the fighting. One thousand have been killed in the last year.

[redacted] On December 2, 2000, my husband left for his rice fields to work. After he left, I heard cross fire. This was not unusual. There were lots of troops in the area because of the Exxon plant. The shots were very close. I went to the fields, and my husband was already dead. Three witnesses who were in the fields with my husband said that the soldiers from Unit 113, the Exxon soldiers, arrived in military vehicles and shot at the group of farmers who were working the fields. My husband was the one who was hit.

[redacted] I was riding my bicycle to the market in Simpangulong to sell some vegetables. I saw soldiers ahead on the road. They were from TNI Unit 113. I was afraid, but I had never been questioned before, and I was doing what I always do. One of the soldiers shot at me as I approached on my bike. I was hit in the hand. I fell in a ditch, and the soldiers approached. One of them threw a hand grenade or something explosive in the ditch. It went off. I don't know who found me. Now I cannot work.

[redacted] I was traveling to the refugee camp near Point A of the Exxon-Mobil property. This camp was for people who have had their homes destroyed by the occupying troops. I was on a motorbike. I saw three trucks of soldiers. One was Unit 113; I didn't see the others to identify. One of the soldiers shot at me and hit my leg in three places. The soldiers took me to a local police office. They tortured me for four hours and would not let me see a doctor

touched my body and opened my clothes while holding a gun to my head. He pushed me into a back room and then was touching me all over. He noticed that I was pregnant, and he jammed his gun into my belly. When he did this I backed up and ran away. He yelled that he was going to shoot me, but I kept running.

[illegible] I was on my way to Matan-
[illegible] village. I'm not sure which TNI unit it
[illegible] tortured me with beatings and electric
[illegible] a soldier had carved GAM, the guerrilla

[illegible], Aceh: I was having coffee near my house. Soldiers of TNI Unit 113 came up to me and said I was a member of GAM. I told them I wasn't. I was a farmer. They took me to their office in Matangub. For three hours they beat me with pieces of wood. They demanded that I confess to being in GAM. Then they took me back to my village and held me up by my arms and told [illegible] I said I didn't know because I was not a member of GAM. They beat me some more in front of the villagers. Next they went to my house. They destroyed my vegetable shop, stole my bicycle, and shot me in the leg. They took me to a hospital for treatment of the gunshot wound and my other injuries. Then they took me to the police office in North Aceh, where they kept me for four months. They tortured me constantly. They wanted me to confess to being in GAM, but I was not so I couldn't. The leader of my village freed me after four months by paying a bribe.

[illegible], Aceh: On August 11, 2000, I left my [illegible] the TNI. They pulled me off my motorbike and beat me so badly I couldn't see. I was handcuffed and blindfolded. They beat me some more. I was tortured almost every day for almost three months. Mainly they beat me and shocked me with electricity. They shocked my face and my genitals. Once they took me outside and threatened to [illegible] grave. They lowered me into the pit, and I could have touched a pile of bodies. They were trying to get me to confess that I was a criminal. The place where I was was inside the compound of the Arun gas plant. The soldiers were from Unit 113.

[illegible], age 24: A soldier from Unit 113, the [illegible] He asked for my husband. He went to ask him about GAM. [illegible] but my husband was not at home. The [illegible] and beat me. He

PLANNING CROATIA'S FINAL SOLUTION

From minutes of the September 12 and September 19, 1993, meetings of the Council for Defense and National Security of the Republic of Croatia. That year, Croat forces murdered up to 400 Serb civilians in the town of Gospič; in 1995 almost 600,000 Serbs were driven from the Krajina region. This transcript is the first proof that President Franjo Tudjman planned and directed ethnic cleansing and other war crimes. The minutes were obtained by Chris Hedges of the New York Times. *Tudjman died in December 1999.*

[illegible]

PRESIDENT FRANJO TUDJMAN: Gentlemen, it seems that during the last few days we have had a great military success with the Gospič operation. At the moment when the whole world is recommending—those from the friendly countries as well as the others—that we pursue extreme caution and political flexibility, we nevertheless let ourselves be drawn, both by the Serbs' provocations as well as by our own decision, into a situation that, momentarily, no matter how we interpret it, we have commenced an attack, which they have survived, and, given our own preparations, that cannot be hidden. Croatia can be held to a charge that it is preparing a war with the Serbs in Croatia.

I must admit, that this is my responsibility, as I [illegible] the Gospič operation. When General Bobetko came to me with the proposal I took into account the Serb provocations—small provocations; for example, their entrance into the Velebit Range, where they killed some three special policemen, cutting off an ear of one, then the placing of mines at Pakrac, thereby creating a certain political climate both in the public and the parliament—so I accepted the proposal that we are going into this operation, although I was not informed, as I later found out, about all the elements. For example, I knew that Divoselo is Serb, but





From the *Reconstruction* with the cast [illegible]

not observe this and then [illegible]

[illegible] tanks

[illegible] Therefore, we have to attempt to put

[illegible] remains which lie underneath

will not permit. That is not the only focal point, only the question of national minorities in [illegible] Africa, the Middle East, etc. The international community is oriented [illegible] the resolution of these questions [illegible] for example [illegible] the relations between the Arabs and Israel is long resolved [illegible] and that directs us to follow that path, not by war; whereas in our country there is a growing understanding that Croatia must resolve the problem by war, contrary to international [illegible] ethnically cleansing [illegible] Serb [illegible] created. That is happening in practice because we cannot hide that they have the information that in Slavonia, western [illegible] Serb villages disappeared from the face of the earth, and that now these three, four Serb villages were eradicated. This creates a certain picture of Croatia on which we cannot build our political status or economic relations with the world. Understand that.

VALENTIĆ: That is not the issue, President, but this awaits us in a year again. It is only the question [illegible] this awaits us [illegible] Yes, if it awaits us then it means that we have to prepare also politically, that we have to prepare ourselves better militarily, and then we also have to prepare so that after our future operation they will no longer be able to hit Zagreb.

VALENTIĆ: President, as you know, there are many mixed marriages in Gospič; several civilians and old ladies are in Senj, where there is a certain concentration camp, and that is where we should take those that we captured at Citluk and Pocitelj. We should place them there in an acceptable way and then show them off and say a few things. Because I know this for sure—because they asked me to intervene, a granddaughter of one of these is married to my cousin—that in Senj there is a concentration area where you have these refugees from Citluk, Divoselo, and Pocitelj. Then we show them that we do it in this fashion.

PRESIDENT: That would be very good, very good.

VALENTIĆ: And then when we display them, we pretty them up, wash them, etc.

SEPTEMBER 9, 1993

PRESIDENT: Gentlemen, I open this meeting of the Council for Defense and National Security with the agenda: the development of the situation concerning Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croat-Serb relations. In addition, these UNPROFOR people [U.N. peacekeepers] and others tell us that we did not have to leave the cleanest clearance behind us after we retreated.

MATE GRANIĆ [FOREIGN MINISTER]: That is the last news, the main news of the last twenty-four hours on the SKY News and CNN.

[illegible] We turned over fifty-two, so it was said, usable Serb bodies, and the rest were removed. There are some fifty, sixty, in the forest, because it is more difficult to collect them in the forest. But it could happen that they [UNPROFOR] entered a little bit too fast. However, that was cleansed, absolutely. They cannot find anything over there, at least I think so.

PRESIDENT: Gentlemen, to conclude, I have another obligation. Three things: no military actions from our side now and no provocations; prepare to swallow, because now things are [illegible] solved in the United Nations and it is important to know whether the Croats are for a peaceful solution or not. Therefore, continue the conversations with Serbs on all levels. That is one thing. Second, Mate [Granić], in Bosnia and Herzegovina under all circumstances carry through the agreements [with the Bosnians], particularly everything that we did there—concentration camps, etc., etc.

WHAT THE GENERAL SAID

Croonenbergh's Fly. *Translated from the German*

chess pieces are carved out of bone:
[illegible]
muttered in the brass buttons of my uniform.
[illegible]
until the hungry mouths of graves go silent.
I will stroke the breasts of my women
like marble monuments to the fallen.
[illegible]
untouched and raw.

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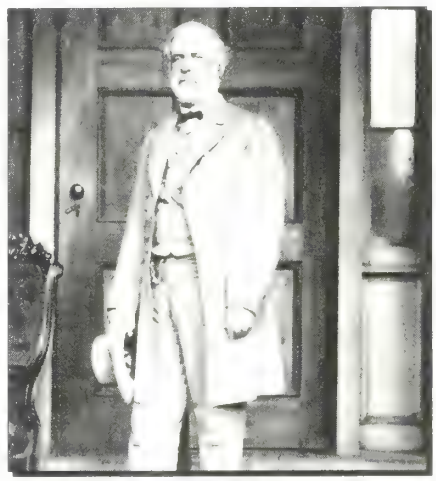
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[illegible] at Blair & Paoia, Santa Monica, California

I SEE RED PEOPLE

[illegible] 1978 [illegible] experiments [illegible] people [illegible] remote viewing [illegible] "URDF-3." *The document was obtained by Jeffrey Richelson of the National Security Archive for his book* The Wizards of Langley: Inside the [illegible] Science and Technology.

The [illegible] on July 9, 1974, at Stanford Research Institute (SRI). The [illegible] geographical target selected from the *Times of* [illegible]. The coordinates of the target were given as 50 9'59"N and 78 22'22"E; Subject wrote down these coordinates. It was emphasized that this was a "real target" as opposed to [illegible]. After the experimenters showed Subject the target location at 60 miles WSW of Semipalatinsk. The target was described [illegible] was 25 to 30 miles SW of Irtysh River. Subject was told to start with a view of the general area as seen from 50,000 feet and get the layout of any complexes or buildings, or whatever.

When the coordinates were given, Subject said he was getting a picture that the Soviets had done a lot of rocket launching and recovery out of that area. As he starts viewing, he says it's dark over there at the present time, quite a cloud cover, and a full moon. He immediately sees the river and heads SW from the river to the institute, as he calls it. He says the area he's looking at has low one-story buildings that are partially dug into the ground, giving the effect of very short, squatty buildings. In reality, these buildings are fairly roomy on the inside.

He then finds that he is looking at "a guy in a very peculiar type of helmet." He gets bogged down in the specifics of the purpose of this helmet and shifts his attention to look at the cosmonauts (who were in orbit at the time) to compare helmets. He says the Soviets are running some tests on some equipment that currently has to do with their space program. Then he backs off from this specific subject and says, "I'll look around and come back to that," but he never does.

Subject was then asked to describe the general terrain and perhaps the building layout. He drew a sketch in which he correctly identifies

[illegible] from the river passes through a gorge. The [illegible] are some antennas at URDF-3, none are as tall as the 500-foot antenna he described.

[illegible] door pool he saw, which he said is 60' x 150'. He said they use the pool for underwater testing and [illegible] door pool at URDF-3.

[illegible] been there for two to three years, when in fact it's [illegible] cations building, one of the experimenters asks whether one of the specifics he mentioned might well be something else. He takes another look and changes his mind, saying, "You may be right," [illegible] what the experimenter suggests. The experimenter quickly informed Subject that "we really don't know what this thing is," and Subject replies with, [illegible]

Subject saw an array of telephone poles about [illegible] was then asked to go up to 50,000 feet to look again and describe the layout. He scanned in a clockwise direction. Nothing in his description is correct except that the area is arid and has low hills [illegible] cations of a small village, an airstrip, a cluster of pine trees, and a city 60 miles to the southwest.

Subject was asked if he saw a railroad anywhere. The closest railroad to the target that he could see was about 60 miles north. In reality, there is a railway in the main support complex. He was asked to indicate again where the telephone poles were and to map out the perimeter of the area. He drew in the telephone-pole grid with a circle of trees around the grid. There is no telephone-pole grid like this at or near URDF-3.

The experimenters asked him the dimensions of Building One and he had a very difficult time establishing them when he finally settled on 80' x 160'. He said Building One was the dominant building due to its height and central location; [illegible] building at URDF-3 that matches the above de- [illegible]

[illegible] mgs "A, B, C, and D" were really the surface elements of an underground building. He looked underground and said, "No, that's a concrete apron, and there's nothing subterranean right in that particular area." This description is the most negative evidence yet and tends to discredit Sub-

mgs, tape transcripts and sketches that were generated during the four-day experiment. [illegible] concluded that Subject's remote-viewing [illegible]

[illegible]

HEY YEW

[illegible]

The Tree
[illegible]
University Road
[illegible]

[illegible]

THIS IS A FORMAL NOTICE to let you know that on 25 September 2001 the council made a Tree Preservation Order. In simple [illegible] the map in the order without the council's [illegible]

Some explanatory guidance on Tree Preservation Orders is given in the enclosed leaflet, "Protected Trees: A Guide to Tree Preservation [illegible] in force on this basis for a further six months, or until the Order is confirmed by the council.

[illegible] with regulation four of the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999. All valid objections or representations [illegible] on whether to confirm the Order is made.

[illegible] that decision has been made. In the meantime [illegible] like any further information or [illegible]

AINST
HEETS AND
IR WAYS

they're working their

everything and every person they touch, they reduce to evidence, example, indicator.

For example, take Samantha Wilson, age twenty-six, lifelong resident of Jamestown, New York, currently residing at 1405 East Avenue, Apartment 3. Wilson is a mother of three children, ages four, two, and six months. Wilson works in a dentist's office, doing the insurance paperwork. She enjoys making desserts, watching television, and going to the park. Wilson, or whatever is left of her now, may be best remembered as a component in certain published reports on life expectancy, infant mortality, family income as it correlates to education, etc., etc. The experts are turning us into brittle things, is the point, brittle and thin. By the summer solstice their brigades will join the main army, combine forces, rally and whatnot, and have their way with us. Presently they will meet at 40° north latitude, 122° 35' west longitude. Such is their plan as I know it.

I know all this because I was an expert, or I should say I believed myself expert in certain areas, specifically virtual mathematics and various applied manipulations of infinity as they relate to various stock market indices. As some of you may know, I've since repudiated that period in my life, however, and so stand before you today a new man, decidedly and vigorously inexpert—joyously inexpert, in fact. And I stand before you to warn you and to say that this army of experts must be stopped. Now, I could stand up here and show you certain bar graphs and line charts that would horrify you, possibly anger you, perhaps even incite violence, but instead let me say this: I will help you. If you allow me to do so. Let me. Let me help you. I will do what I can. We all must. If you choose. For our effort will require your total cooperation, of course. If you should be willing. Dedication, devotion, and commitment—you are, I trust, familiar with all these qualities? But let any one of you be unsure or even momentarily waver in the slightest and we will most assuredly fail. How bad would that be? It would be bad, let me tell you. But don't think of that, not now. Put it out of your minds. It's all just too depressing. Look, if we work together we will succeed. Surely we will succeed. Listen, how could we not succeed? In the end, I mean.

Now, this is what we will do.







[Blacklist]

VIDEO KILLED THE RADIO STAR

filiates in the wake of the September 11 attacks

"99 Luft Balloons/99 Red Balloons," Nina
"America," Neil Diamond
"American Pie," Don McLean
"Bad Religion," Godsmack
"Benny & The Jets," Elton John
"Bits and Pieces," Dave Clark Five
"Blowin' in the Wind," Peter Paul and Mary
"Brain Stew," Green Day
"Break Stuff," Limp Bizkit
"Bridge over Troubled Water," Simon and
"Bullet with Butterfly Wings," Smashing Pumpkins
"Burnin' for You," Blue Oyster Cult
Chick Chick Boom," Megadeth
Crash into Me," Dave Matthews Band
Dancing in the Streets," Martha and the Van
dellas/Van Halen
'Dust in the Wind," Kansas
Head Like a Hole," Nine Inch Nails
'Hey Man, Nice Shot," Filter

"Morning Has Broken," Cat Stevens
"New York, New York," Frank Sinatra

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Dear Greg, I hate this so much. Nobody can be the same as you were. Sam is certainly a far cry from you. It's so hard to hate him. And then I

I sure as Hell don't want to marry anyone like Sam. I'd cry all the time if I did. You're so good

And you're gone and I really can't stand it. I *did* [illegible] try. I really did. But it's not at all what

worth it anymore. It's so ruined and structured [illegible] it's not there. Where's a Mel-

[illegible] Eat Eat to

"Nowhere to Run," Martha and the Vandellas
"On Broadway," Drifters
"Only the Good Die Young," Billy Joel
"Peace Train," Cat Stevens
"Rock the Casbah," The Clash
"Rocket Man," Elton John
"Ruby Tuesday," Rolling Stones
"Run Like Hell," Pink Floyd
"Safe in New York City," AC/DC
"Say Hello to Heaven," Temple of the Dog
"Shoot to Thrill," AC/DC
"Shot Down in Flames," AC/DC
"Smokin'," Boston
"Smooth Criminal," Alien Ant Farm
"Some Heads Are Gonna Roll," Judas Priest
"Speed Kills," Push
"Spirit in the Sky," Norman Greenbaum
"Stairway to Heaven," Led Zeppelin
"Suicide Solution," Black Sabbath
"Sunday Bloody Sunday," U2
"Sure Shot," Beastie Boys
"That'll Be the Day," Buddy Holly and the Crickets
"The Boy from New York City," Ad Libs
"The End," The Doors
"Ticket to Ride," The Beatles
"Travelin' Man," Ricky Nelson
"Tuesday's Gone," Lynyrd Skynyrd
"Walk like an Egyptian," Bangles
"War Pigs," Black Sabbath
"War," Edwin Starr/Bruce Springsteen
"We Gotta Get Out of This Place," The Animals
"What a Wonderful World," Louis Armstrong

[Ruling]

ECCE HOMO

From a memo addressed to the U.S. Department of the Interior's director of Fish and Wildlife Service in May 1987 by Gale Norton, currently the secretary of the interior, when she worked in the department's conservation and wildlife program. The Samish Indian Nation of the Pacific Northwest had sought designation as an endangered species, suggesting that such species receive benefits from the DOI superior to those granted to the tribe.

The Samish Indian Tribe has petitioned the Service for a listing as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), 16 U.S.C. § 1531 *et seq.* We have concluded that the tribe does not qualify for listing.

The petition contends that the tribe is a "population," distinguished by language and habits, of

the species *Homo sapiens*. They do not contend that *Homo sapiens* as a whole is endangered or threatened, nor does that species appear to be. Since its origins in the area of central Africa some millions of years ago, *Homo sapiens* has expanded its range to encompass virtually the entire globe.[2] The listing decision must, of course, be based upon "the best scientific and commercial data available." 16 U.S.C. § 1533(b). A review of this data indicates that *Homo sapiens* are found in all fifty states, comprise 100 percent of the population of each, and are subject to extensive legal protection against taking and commercialization. It is thus apparent that *Homo sapiens* is not endangered as a species.

The petition raises the question of whether a group may be listed as an endangered "population" of a larger species. Such a "population" may be listed. 16 U.S.C. § 1532(16). However, to qualify, such population must be "of any vertebrate fish or wildlife." The question is thus posed whether the Samish, or any portion of *Homo sapiens*, may be classified as "wildlife." The petition correctly notes that our regulations define "wildlife" to include "any member of the animal kingdom." 50 C.F.R. § 424.02(n). The Service's more general regulations indicate, however, that "wildlife" is properly confined to "any wild animal." 50 C.F.R. § 10.12. Traditionally, wild animals are "those wild by nature, which, because of habit, mode of life, or natural instinct, are incapable of being completely domesticated, and require the exercise of art, force, or skill to keep them in subjection." 3A C.J.S. Animals § 3 (1973). While certain classes of *Homo sapiens* may meet this test, and all may meet it during certain periods (roughly the ages of 2–3 and 16–21), it cannot be said that *Homo sapiens* as a whole are not "domesticated."

Furthermore, if *Homo sapiens*, or a population thereof, were listed as endangered, the Fish and Wildlife Service would be allowed to authorize their taking for scientific purposes, 16 U.S.C. § 1539 (a) (1) (A), and to allow their killing incidental to otherwise lawful activity. 16 U.S.C. § 1539 (A) (1) (B). Alaskan natives would be entitled to kill them, sell the edible portions within their villages, and to convert them into "authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing." 16 U.S.C. § 1539 (e). State laws on assault, homicide, and conversion of persons into authentic native articles of handicrafts and clothing would be void as in conflict with activities permitted under ESA. 16 U.S.C. § 1535 (f). It would likewise be illegal to transport members of listed populations in interstate commerce, or to allow them to enter or leave the United States. 16 U.S.C. § 1538 (a) (1).[3]

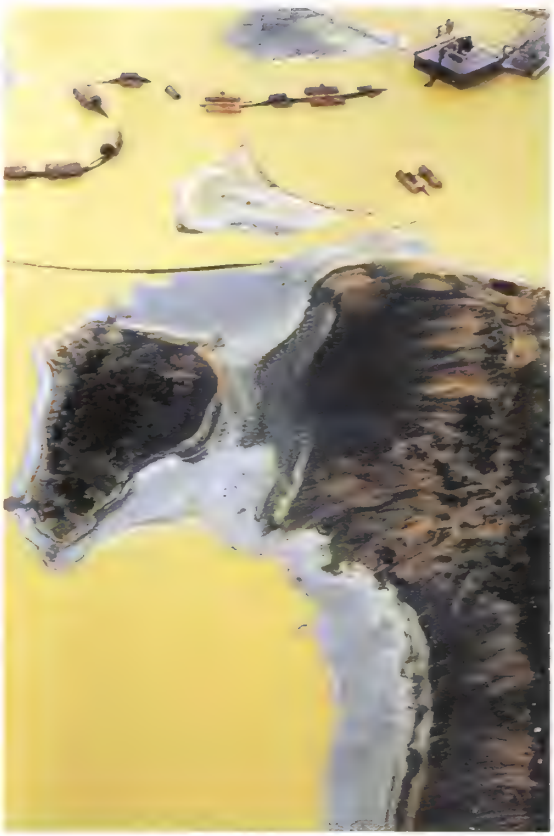
We are accordingly of the opinion that a population of *Homo sapiens*, no matter how distinct, is not "wildlife" subject to listing under the ESA.

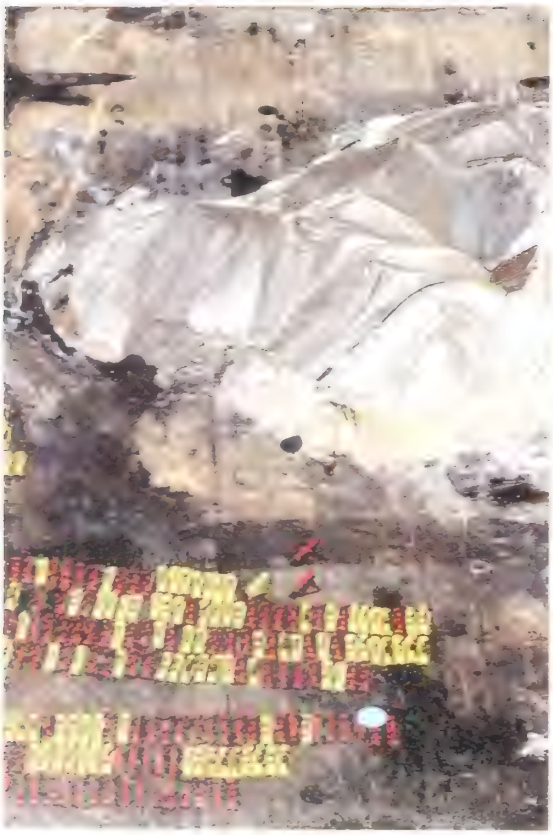
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]









would be the result of his desire, and pleasure would quickly take possession of her, and then, after releasing her, lazily into caresses, each one more languid than the former. Intellect would look for a way to cancel out the reciprocity that leads to a checkmate; the game's winner would be the first one to maneuver pawns to their traditional position along the first two rows on the chessboard. All things would be returning to their origins—a crepuscular world where we would move toward the moment that preceded existence. Nostalgia would be a premonition of an act, and daydreaming—a supreme form of memory—would thrive by obliterating comprehension of things that during a timely and all-encompassing evolution had preoccupied our minds. To forget is to live. Our demise as humans would be marked by nuptials while organic life would amount to a process of excisions always directed toward that unique sum of inert matter, and in that state the spirit of goodwill would again be lost; however, the silent life of atoms would continue to follow a mathematical destiny within eternities (governed by our same whims—what we call progress and logos), and there, where we have already been, set off luminous celestial catastrophes. In these times, lovers would swear to a doomed love while historians would spend their sleepless nights destroying chronicles of past worlds. Every kind of music would be an attempt to attain harmonious silence. Painters would be in pursuit of complete blindness no different than enterprising architects, who demolish cities and dig pits less deep with each scoop. Inexorably, poets would muddle the meaning of words and, by this magnificent reduction of language's universality, nations would expand, and history, like a person's life, would advance slowly but assiduously toward an extreme sort of individualization, first among subcultures, next by way of global conglomerates, then within linguistic strongholds, and later on, throughout the social, political, and economic life of communities. Terrain would be converted into urban sites that, in turn, would be made up of distinct, local neighborhoods, inside of which each family would thrive like an odd, mutant vegetable. Architecture would arise out of the fascination with chaos and the day when surviving societies reliant on interdependence (social solidarity), in which fathers and sons first, then men and women afterward, would discover hatred and give themselves to it with extreme passion and prejudice. At noon, suffering from memory loss, executioners and the police would become impassioned and their pronouncements, a little too smothering, would target anyone in search of the supreme pleasure of speech, who rescued words aspiring for excellence with the sole purpose of hearing them, and this would be a reliable predictor of a language fast becoming extinct. Heterogeneity [illegible] contributed to polarize life outside [illegible] way. The ideal inherent in [illegible] al of preservation that embraces all of our ancestors, who secretly mandate the [illegible] dividuals, would be a regression.

Progressives would be condemned [illegible] sublime pleasures of a long life in the richest libraries, the most promiscuous brothels, and academies holding to impeccable standards and to possession of the most splendid of treasures. Women, in pursuit of their ideal, would become fat, dirty, and greasy; and men, wise, strong, and humble. Throughout the millennia of that resolute, degenerative slide by the human species, represented by such individuals, so many virtues would have accumulated that the devil's good graces wouldn't take long to overwhelm them. However, according to the memoirs of the memoirists, who are the prophets of that universe, in unsettling god came from somewhere beyond those spent millennia when the species was at the point of surviving eternally, and he delivered a talisman to assure their salvation: it was nothing more than a polished object.

Humans looked at it intently and discovered evasive eyes that stared back with equal intensity, looking them up and down slowly. And these people, ever faithful to the lineage of the species, who had never transgressed death's imperative, caught a fleeting glance, and from that a recognizable face. They gave in to the temptation of mounting memorials. They became slaves to memory and consequently unhappy with the situation; they designed new systems—surfaces that reflected them as stars in the heavens, a number, or a word. By this means, the human species surrendered to the glories of invention that allowed observation of the self reflected in one's own gaze.

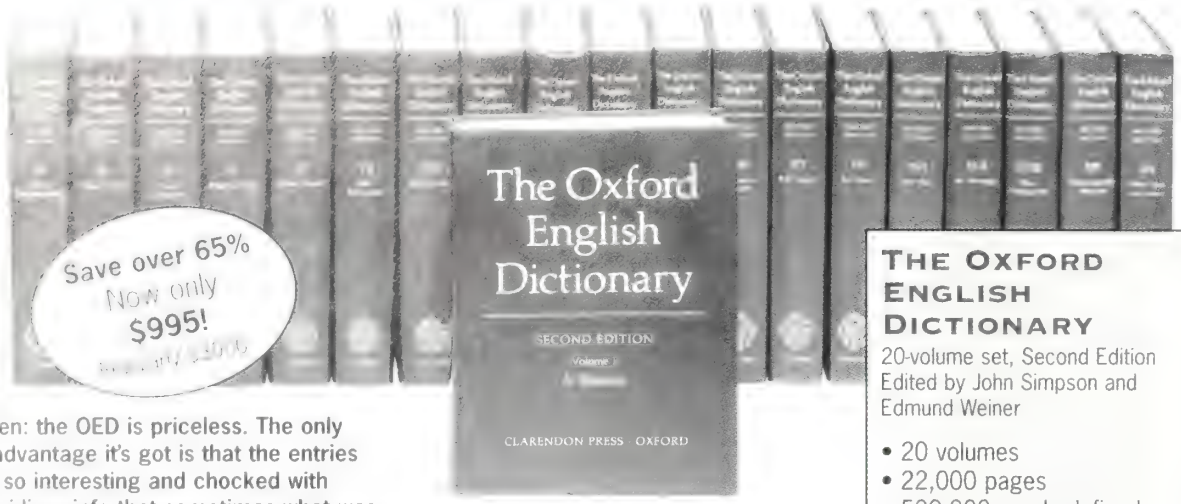
Then, because of the sin from that inordinate pride, humans suffered remorse: once a man prepared a surface so it reflected him in the shape of a woman, and the image of that woman was his reflection mirroring his own gaze toward the infinite that, till then, had been going on and on, but at this precise moment had also arrived. This person named the surface "mirror" and the discovery "love": love commemorated the sudden recognition of two bodies that lamentably went on separating forever here, where every encounter was a farewell there.

Commemorating his ingenuity he founded a city and he gave it a name like the name of his invention reflected in the mirror. Since then time has turned its back on what is infinitely the future because the mirror bestows an instant in which the course of time reverses and the past turns to the future.

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IN THE RUINS OF THE FUTURE

Reflections on terror and loss in the shadow of September

By Don DeLillo

I.

In the past decade the surge of capital markets has dominated discourse and shaped global consciousness. Multinational corporations have come to seem more vital and influential than governments. The dramatic climb of the Dow and the speed of the Internet summoned us all to live permanently in the future, in the utopian glow of cyber-capital, because there is no memory there and this is where markets are uncontrolled and investment potential has no limit.

All this changed on September 11. Today, again, the world narrative belongs to terrorists. But the primary target of the men who attacked the Pentagon and the World Trade Center was not the global economy. It is America that drew their fury. It is the high gloss of our modernity. It is the thrust of our technology. It is our perceived godlessness. It is the blunt force of our foreign policy. It is the power of American culture to penetrate every wall, home, life, and mind.

Terror's response is a narrative that has been developing over years, only now becoming inescapable. It is *our* lives and minds that are occupied now. This catastrophic event changes the way we think and act, moment to moment, week to week, for unknown weeks and months to come, and steely years. Our world, parts of our world, have crumbled into theirs, which means we are living in a place of danger and rage.

The protesters in Genoa, Prague, Seattle, and other cities want to decelerate the global momentum that seemed to be driving unmindfully toward a landscape of consumer-robots and social instability, with the chance of self-determination probably diminishing for most people in most countries. Whatever acts of violence marked the protests, most of

Don DeLillo's most recent novel is The Body Artist. *His novella* Pafko at the Wall, *which just appears in* Harper's Magazine *this month, has not yet been published in book form.*

slow things down, even things out, hold off the white-hot future.

The terrorists of September 11 want to bring back the past.

2.

( ) ur freedom of expression and our justice system's provisions

routinely filled with exchange of every sort, an open circuit of work, ta family, and expressible feeling. The terrorist, planted in a Florida tow pushing his supermarket cart, nodding to his neighbor, lives in a far n rower format. This is his edge, his strength. Plots reduce the world. builds a plot around his anger and our indifference. He lives a certain ki of apartness, hard and tight. This is not the self-watcher, the soft wh dangling boy who shoots someone to keep from disappearing into himse The terrorist shares a secret and a self. At a certain point he and his bro ers may begin to feel less motivated by politics and personal hatred than brotherhood itself. They share the codes and protocols of their missi here and something deeper as well, a vision of judgment and devastation

Does the sight of a woman pushing a stroller soften the man to her h manity and vulnerability, and her child's as well, and all the people he

This is his edge, that he does not see her. Years here, waiting, taking f ng lessons, making the routine gestures of community and home, the cre card, the bank account, the post-office box. All tactical, linked, layered. I knows who we are and what we mean in the world—an idea, a righteo fever in the brain. But there is no defenseless human at the end of his gaze

The sense of disarticulation we hear in the term "Us and Them" h never been so striking, at either end.

We can tell ourselves that whatever we've done to inspire bitterne distrust, and rancor, it was not so damnable as to bring this day down o our heads. But there is no logic in apocalypse. They have gone beyond th bounds of passionate payback. This is heaven and hell, a sense of arme martyrdom as the surpassing drama of human experience.

He prefers [illegible] submission to God and meditates on the blood to come

3.

The Bush Administration was feeling a nostalgia for the Cold Wa This is over now. Many things are over. The narrative ends in the rubbl and it is left to us to create the counter-narrative.

There are a hundred thousand stories crisscrossing New York, Washing ton, and the world. Where we were, whom we know, what we've seen heard. There are the doctors' appointments that saved lives, the ce phones that were used to report the hijackings. Stories generating othe and people running north out of the rumbling smoke and ash. Men run ning in suits and ties, women who'd lost their shoes, cops running fro the skydive of all that towering steel.

People running for their lives are part of the story that is left to us.

There are stories of heroism and encounters with dread. There are sto ries that carry around their edges the luminous ring of coincidence, fate or premonition. They take us beyond the hard numbers of dead and miss ing and give us a glimpse of elevated being. For a hundred who are arbi trarily dead, we need to find one person saved by a flash of forewarning There are configurations that chill and awe us both. Two women on tw planes, best of friends, who die together and apart, Tower 1 and Tower 2 What desolate epic tragedy might bear the weight of such juxtaposition

PHOTOGRAPH [illegible]
PERSON'S ART [illegible]
HOPEFUL LISTS OF IDENTIFYING
FEATURES (MAN WITH [illegible]
TATTOO, UPPER RIGHT ARM)



) we can also ask what symmetry, bleak and touching both, takes one
-ld, spruce the other's grief.'
he brother of one of the women worked in one of the towers. He
) aged to escape.
1 Union Square Park, about two miles north of the attack site, the im-
) vised memorials are another part of our response. The flags, flower beds,
l votive candles, the lamppost hung with paper airplanes, the passages
) the Koran and the Bible, the letters and poems, the cardboard John
Wayne, the children's drawings of the Twin Towers, the hand-painted
ll's for Free Hugs, Free Back Rubs, the graffiti of love and peace on the
a equestrian statue.
here are many photo-
graphs of missing persons,
e accompanied by hopeful
ts of identifying features.
Man with panther tattoo, up-
right arm.) There is the
ophonist, playing softly.
Here is the sculptured flag of
rippling copper and alu-
minum, six feet long, with two
young people still attending to
the finer details of the piece.
Then there are the visitors
to the park. The artifacts on
display represent the conflu-
ence of a number of cultural
ics, patriotic and multidevo-
tional and retro hippie. The
visitors move quietly in the
floating aromas of candlewax,
pines, and bus fumes. There are
many people this mild
evening, and in their voices,
manner, clothing, and in the
color of their skin they recapit-
ulate the mix we see in the
photocopied faces of the lost.
For the next fifty years,
people who were not in the
area when the attacks oc-
curred will claim to have been
there. In time, some of them
will believe it. Others will
claim to have lost friends or
relatives, although they did not.
This is also the counter-narrative, a shadow history of false memories
and imagined loss.
The Internet is a counter-narrative, shaped in part by rumor, fantasy,
and mystical reverberation.
The cell phones, the lost shoes, the handkerchiefs mashed in the faces
of running men and women. The box cutters and credit cards. The paper
that came streaming out of the towers and drifted across the river to
Brooklyn back yards: status reports, résumés, insurance forms. Sheets of
paper driven into concrete, according to witnesses. Paper sticking into
brick fires, fixed there.
These are among the smaller objects and more marginal stories in the
vasted ruins of the day. We need them, even the common tools of the ter-
rorists, to set against the massive spectacle that continues to seem unman-
ageable, too powerful a thing to set into our frame of practiced response.

A [illegible] the windows. Karen was half dressed, gr[illegible] and trained [illegible] on some clothes and talking with her hu[illegible] and scooping things to take out to the corridor, and they looked a[illegible] as if she had fourteen heads.

They stayed in the corridor for a while, thinking there might b[illegible] ondary explosions. They waited, and began to feel safer, and went ba[illegible] [illegible] apartment.

At the next impact, Marc knew in the sheerest second befor[illegible] shock wave broadsided their building that it was a second plane, im[illegible]ble, striking the second tower. Their building was two blocks away[illegible] he'd thought the first crash was an accident.

They went back to the hallway, where others began to gather, fifte[illegible] twenty people.

Karen ran back for a cell phone, a cordless phone, a charger, w[illegible] sweaters, snacks for the kids, and then made a quick dash to the bedr[illegible] for her wedding ring.



From the window she [illegible] people running in the street, t[illegible]ers locked shoulder to shoul[illegible] immobilized, with debris co[illegible] down on them. People were t[illegible]pled, struck by falling objects [illegible] there was ash and paper ev[illegible] where, paper whipping thro[illegible] the air, no sign of light or sky.

Cell phones were down. [illegible] talked on the cordless, recei[illegible] information measured out in [illegible] drops. They were convinced [illegible] the situation outside was far [illegible] grave than it was here.

Smoke began to enter the [illegible]ridor.

Then the first tower fell. [illegible] thought it was a bomb. When [illegible] talked to someone on the ph[illegible] and found out what had h[illegible]pened, she felt a surreal rel[illegible] Bombs and missiles were [illegible] falling everywhere in the city[illegible] was not all-out war, at least [illegible] yet.

Marc was in the apartment [illegible]ting chairs for the older peo[illegible] for the woman who'd had [illegible] surgery. When he heard the [illegible] low drumming rumble, he st[illegible] in a strange dead calm and s[illegible] "Something is happening." [illegible] sounded exactly like what it was, a tall tower collapsing.

The windows were surfaced with ash now, blacked out completely, a[illegible] he wondered what was out there. What remained to be seen and did [illegible] want to see it?

They all moved into the stairwell, behind a fire door, but smoke k[illegible] coming in. It was gritty ash, and they were eating it.

He ran back inside, grabbing towels off the racks and washcloths out [illegible] drawers and drenching them in the sink, and filling his bicycle water b[illegible]tles, and grabbing the kids' underwear.

e thought the crush of buildings was the thing to fear most. This is
t would kill them.

person was on the phone, talking to a friend in the district attorney's of
absent half a mile to the north. She was pleading for help. She
ged, pleaded, and hung up. For the next hour a detective kept calling
dvice and encouragement.

are came back out to the corridor. I think we *might* die, he told him
hedging his sense of what would happen next.

he detective told Karen to stay where they were.

When the second tower fell, my heart fell with it. I called Marc, who is
nephew, on his cordless. I couldn't stop thinking of the size of the tow
nd the meager distance between those buildings and his. He answered,
talked. I have no memory of the conversation except for his final re-
k, slightly urgent, concerning someone on the other line, who might
ending help.

moke was seeping out of the elevator shaft now. Karen was saying
dbye to her father in Oregon. Not hello-goodbye. But goodbye-I-
nk-we-are-going-to-die. She thought smoke would be the thing that
it.

People sat on chairs along the walls. They chatted about practical mat-
. They sang songs with the kids. The kids in the group were coopera-
because the adults were damn scared.

There was an improvised rescue in progress. Karen's friend and a col-
gue made their way down from Centre Street, turning up with two po-
men they'd enlisted en route. They had dust masks and a destination,
d they searched every floor for others who might be stranded in the
lding.

They came out into a world of ash and near night. There was no one
e to be seen now on the street. Gray ash covering the cars and pave-
nt, ash falling in large flakes, paper still drifting down, discarded shoes,
llers, briefcases. The members of the group were masked and toweled,
ildren in adults' arms, moving east and then north on Nassau Street,
ing not to look around, only what's immediate, one step and then an
ner, all closely focused, a pregnant woman, a newborn, a dog.

They were covered in ash when they reached shelter at Pace Universi-
where there was food and water, and kind and able staff members, and
as-leak scare, and more running people.

Workers began pouring water on the group. *Stay wet, stay wet.* This was
e theme of the first half hour.

Later a line began to form along the food counter.

Someone said, "I don't want cheese on that."

Someone said, "I like it better not so cooked."

Not so incongruous really, just people alive and hungry, beginning to
themselves again.

5.

Technology is our fate, our truth. It is what we mean when we call
rselves the only superpower on the planet. The materials and methods
devise make it possible for us to claim our future. We don't have to de
nd on God or the prophets or other astonishments. We are the aston-
ment. The miracle is what we ourselves produce, the systems and net
rks that change the way we live and think.

But whatever great skeins of technology lie ahead, ever more complex,
nnective, precise, micro-fractional, the future has yielded, for now, to
edieval expedience, to the old slow furies of cutthroat religion.

Kill the enemy and pluck out his heart.

If others in less scientifically advanced cultures were able to share, want-
to share, some of the blessings of our technology, without a threat to
eir faith or traditions, would they need to rely on a God in whose name

THE FUTURE HAS YIELDED
TO THE OLD SLOW
CUTTHROAT
ENEMY AND PLUCK OUT HIS HEART

olence against the innocent with a promise of "infinite paradise," in

For all those who may want what we've got, there are all those wh
not. These are the men who have fashioned a morality of destruc
They want what they used to have before the waves of Western influe
They surely see themselves as the elect of God whether or not they fo
the central precepts of Islam. It is the presumptive right of those
choose violence and death to speak directly to God. They will kill
then die. Or they will die first, in the cockpit, in clean shoes, accordi

Six days after the attacks, the territory below Canal Street is he
with barricades. There are few civilians in the street. Police at s
checkpoints, troops in camouflage gear at others, wearing gas masks, a
pair of state troopers in conversation, and ten burly men striding ea
hard hats, work pants, and NYPD jackets. A shop owner tries to ta
cop into letting him enter his place of business. He is a small elderly
with a Jewish accent, but there is no relief today. Garbage bags are ev
where in high broad stacks. The area is bedraggled and third-world
with an air of permanent emergency, everything surfaced in ash.

It is possible to pass through some checkpoints, detour around oth
At Chambers Street I look south through the links of the National R
A-Fence barrier. There stands the smoky remnant of filigree that m
the last tall thing, the last sign in the mire of wreckage that there w
towers here that dominated the skyline for over a quarter of a century.

Ten days later and a lot closer, I stand at another barrier with a gr
of people, looking directly into the strands of openwork facade. It is
most too close. It is almost Roman, I-beams for stonework, but not ne
so salvageable. Many here describe the scene to others on cell phones.

"Oh my god I'm standing here," says the man next to me.

The World Trade towers were not only an emblem of advan
technology but a justification, in a sense, for technology's irresistible
to realize in solid form whatever becomes theoretically allowable. O
defined, every limit must be reached. The tactful sheathing of the tow
was intended to reduce the direct threat of such straight-edge enormity
giantism that eased over the years into something a little more fami
and comfortable, even dependable in a way.

Now a small group of men have literally altered our skyline. We ha
fallen back in time and space. It is their technology that marks our m
ments, the small lethal devices, the remote-control detonators they fa
ion out of radios, or the larger technology they borrow from us, passen
jets that become manned missiles.

Maybe this is a grim subtext of their enterprise. They see something
nately destructive in the nature of technology. It brings death to th
customs and beliefs. Use it as what it is, a thing that kills.

6.

Nearly eleven years ago, during the engagement in the Persian G
people had trouble separating the war from coverage of the war. After t
first euphoric days, coverage became limited. The rush of watching
that eerie green night-vision footage, shot from fighter jets in combat, h
been so intense that it became hard to honor the fact that the war w
still going on, untelevised. A layer of consciousness had been stripp
way. People shuttled around, muttering. They were lonely for their war.

The events of September 11 were covered unstintingly. There was
confusion of roles on TV. The raw event was one thing, the coverage a
other. The event dominated the medium. It was bright and totalizing, a
me of us said it was unreal. When we say a thing is unreal, we mean it
so real, a phenomenon so unaccountable and yet so bound to the pow

bjective fact that we can't tilt it to the slant of our perception. First
e planes struck the towers. After a time it became possible for us to ab-
e this, barely. But when the towers fell. When the rolling smoke began
ging downward, floor to floor. This was so vast and terrible that it was
tside imagining even as it happened. We could not catch up to it. But it
real, punishingly so, an expression of the physics of structural limits
avoid in one's soul, and there was the huge antenna falling out of the
straight down, blunt end first, like an arrow moving backward in time.
he event itself has no purchase on the mercies of analogy or simile. We
e to take the shock and horror as it is. But living language is not dimin-
d. The writer wants to understand what this day has done to us. Is it
soon? We seem pressed for time, all of us. Time is scarcer now. There is
nse of compression, plans made hurriedly, time forced and distorted.
language is inseparable from the world that provokes it. The writer be-
s in the towers, trying to imagine the moment, desperately. Before poli-
, before history and religion, there is the primal terror. People falling
n the towers hand in hand. This is part of the counternarrative, hands
spirits joining, human beauty
he crush of meshed steel
n its desertion of every basis
comparison, the event asserts
singularity. There is something
pty in the sky. The writer tries
give memory, tenderness, and
ning to all that howling space.



7.

We like to think America in-
nted the future. We are com-
rtable with the future, intimate
th it. But there are disturbances
ow, in large and small ways, a
m of reconsiderations. Where
e live, how we travel, what we
ink about when we look at our
ildren. For many people, the
ent has changed the grain of
e most routine moment.

We may find that the ruin of
e towers is implicit in other
ings. The new PalmPilot at
gertip's reach, the stretch lim-
sine parked outside the hotel,
e midtown skyscraper under
nstruction, carrying the name
a major investment bank—all
unted in a way by what has
ppened, less assured in their
thority, in the prerogatives
ey offer.

There is fear of other kinds of terrorism, the prospect that biological
d chemical weapons will contaminate the air we breathe and the water
e drink. There wasn't much concern about this after earlier terrorist
ts. This time we are trying to name the future, not in our normally
peful way but guided by dread.

What has already happened is sufficient to affect the air around us, psy-
ologically. We are all breathing the fumes of lower Manhattan, where
aces of the dead are everywhere, in the soft breeze off the river, on
oftops and windows, in our hair and on our clothes.

and holy men dangle from balconies, and the largest images are those
terrorist leader.

Two forces in the world, past and future. With the end of Commun
vail, whatever the inequalities of the system itself. This is still the c
But now there is a global theocratic state, unboundaried and floating

Ideas evolve and de-evolve, and history is turned on end.

8.

On Friday of the first week a long series of vehicles moves slowly w
on Canal Street. Dump trucks, flatbeds, sanitation sweepers. There are
ant earthmovers making a tremendous revving sound. A scant numbe
pedestrians, some in dust masks, others just standing, watching, the
digenous people, clinging to walls and doorways, unaccustomed to tra
that doesn't bring buyers and sellers, goods and cash. The fire rescue
and state police cruiser, the staccato sirens of a line of police vans. C
stand at the sawhorse barriers, trying to clear the way. Ambulances, ch
ry pickers, a fleet of Con Ed trucks, all this clamor moving south a
blocks ahead, into the cloud of sand and ash.

One month earlier I'd taken the same walk, early evening, amo
crowds of people, the panethnic swarm of shoppers, merchants, reside
and passersby, with a few tourists as well, and the man at the curbsto
doing acupoint massage, and the dreadlocked kid riding his bike on t
sidewalk. This was the spirit of Canal Street, the old jostle and stir u
changed for many decades and bearing no sign of SoHo just above, w
its restaurants and artists' lofts, or TriBeCa below, rich in architectu
textures. Here were hardware bargains, car stereos, foam rubber and ind
trial plastics, the tattoo parlor and the pizza parlor.

Then I saw the woman on the prayer rug. I'd just turned the corn
heading south to meet some friends, and there she was, young and sle
der, in a silk headscarf. It was time for sunset prayer, and she was knee
ing, upper body pitched toward the edge of the rug. She was partly co
cealed by a couple of vendors' carts, and no one seemed much to noti
her. I think there was another woman seated on a folding chair near th
curbstone. The figure on the rug faced east, which meant most immed
ately a storefront just a foot and a half from her tipped head but mo
distantly and pertinently toward Mecca, of course, the holiest cit
of Islam.

Some prayer rugs include a *mihrab* in their design, an arched elemer
representing the prayer niche in a mosque that indicates the direction
Mecca. The only locational guide the young woman needed was the Mar
hattan grid.

I looked at her in prayer and it was clearer to me than ever, the dail
sweeping taken-for-granted greatness of New York. The city will accom
modate every language, ritual, belief, and opinion. In the rolls of the dea
of September 11, all these vital differences were surrendered to the im
pact and flash. The bodies themselves are missing in large numbers. Fo
the survivors, more grief. But the dead are their own nation and race, on
identity, young or old, devout or unbelieving—a union of souls. Durin
the *hajj*, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, the faithful must eliminat
every sign of status, income, and nationality, the men wearing identica
strips of seamless white cloth, the women with covered heads, all recall
ing in prayer their fellowship with the dead.

THIS IS ONLY A TEST

Missile defense makes its mark in the Marshall Islands

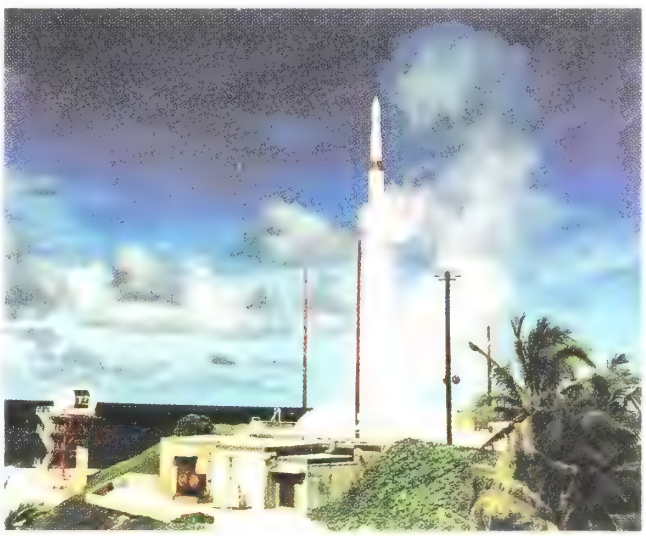
By JoAnn Wypijewski

be master of the sea is an abridgement a monarchy. . . . '[W]hoever is master the sea is master of all things.'

Francis Bacon, 1612

'hoever controls space will control the stiny of earth and when you look at , options out there, I would ask you, ho do you want it to be, Iran, Russia, aq, China? I don't think so. . . For those who doubt and y we can't militarize space, I ould say to you . . . it will be o different than the militaization of earth by the United tates of America.

—Senator Bob Smith, 2000



It was not so long ago, perhaps three generations, that mong peoples of the Pacific he Marshall Islanders were ill known for the skill they ad perfected at least a thouand years before Europeans rst ventured into the great ea. "Navigators of the Pacific," they set out in boats hose hulls they had carved rom breadfruit trees, with sails woven f pandanus leaves, pulling on rope nade from the central rib of coconut-alm fronds, and plotting their course v curious charts, delicate and com-lex, made of wooden strips crisscrossed o mark the position of the land and the lirection of the wind. Before there was compass or sextant, they traveled to other countries and among their own lands—some 1,200 tiny outcroppings in the Central Pacific, only four exceeding one square mile in area, all awash in 750,000 square miles of ocean navigating by the reflected or refracted patterns of waves. The sea was their common highway; the heavens, the common source of the winds and the long waves; the land, the common sustenance of the people, who too kindly shared it with the Spanish, the Germans, the Japanese, and, finally, the Americans.

The foreigners' relics exist beneath the waves as graveyards for warships, planes, and unlucky soldiers, and on land as moldering bunkers or scars along the throats of unlucky Marshallese. Spain called itself the islands' discoverer in the sixteenth century but largely ignored them, casting its most covetous glances northward, to Guam, the Marianas, and the Philippines. Britain's Captain Marshall named them for himself and, he thought, the empire in 1788, before he realized they'd already been claimed, but somehow the name stuck. Missionaries came and brought muumuus. Germany came and brought beer and the money trade, annexing the islands in 1885. Japan seized them unopposed at the start of the First World War and brought rice and roads, then arms, ultimately making them the center of its Pacific fleet in World War II. It's arguable who brought war exactly, but when the firing stopped the United States was in charge, and it brought soda pop and nuclear tests, sixty-seven of them between 1946 and 1958, hence cancer, hence those scars. Then it brought radars and missile tests, anthropologists and the cash economy. Now on the Marshallese atoll of Kwajalein, planes from America disgorge another generation of engineers and contractors and government personnel. They are the testers for National Missile Defense—sometimes called Star Wars, sometimes Son of Star Wars. Beside the runway on which they disembark are decontamination showers, where I

JoAnn Wypijewski is working on a book on the geography of Star Wars for Verso.

the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which has so far limited the project. Mated now are discussions of whether [illegible] and whether that instrument, moving at 16,000 miles an hour, will be able to distinguish an enemy warhead from [illegible] and the rocket, decoy, and [illegible] at 16,000 miles an hour. It all seems topsy-turvy, but in a sense we have arrived at a moment of clarity. For long before it was given a pass, National Missile Defense was working in the only way it had to.



No one knows what the program might finally cost—$60 billion? $100 billion? $240 billion? What matters most is that every year, a billion here a billion there, it goes on. It goes on the way it always has, as a rich source of government contracts and as the projection of a fantasy upon space. It is as real as it gets [illegible].

Some 2,200 miles in each direction from Hawaii, Australia, and Japan, this [illegible] Pacific is the only place on earth where, by dint of geography, imperial history, and a provision of the ABM Treaty, the United States can test its nuclear-missile [illegible] and [illegible] the site of the prototype for the X-band discrimination radar that, according to the current N.M.D. scheme, would be built on the island of Shemya, Alaska. It is the provisional home of [illegible] "battle management/command, control and communications" center that would coordinate and operate the system out of NORAD headquarters in Colorado. It is the launch site for the ground-based interceptor and its kill vehicle, which would sit by scores in underground silos near Fairbanks, Alaska, and Grand Forks, North Dakota.

An installation estimated to be worth $4 billion, the range is home to numerous radars, optical sensors, and other tracking devices which the Army says are the most sophisticated in the world, and which are used in a variety of short- to long-range missile programs, N.M.D. being the largest. The Army stresses that its presence here is not an occupation. The United States leases the real estate upon which these instruments sit, paying Marshallese landowners and the government about $13 million a year. Still, Kwajalein is a place whose people have had to learn to live in a laboratory, where land, water, and the free enjoyment of both have been part of the price of militarizing heaven and earth.

Much as the pinpoint presence of stars suggests the vastness of the sky, atolls provide a sense of scale in the ocean too big and deep to appreciate almost any other way. Across a few hundred million years, calcareous deposits grew along the top ridges of ocean volcanoes at the same rate that the mountains themselves collapsed beneath the waves. What remained were garlands of coral-and-sand strips connected by reef and ringing a lagoon. Seen from the air in their natural state, these are magnificent, improbable patches of leafy green against white to the waterline, then aqua washing over browns and orange golds, deepening to turquoise, drowning in blue. Kwajalein is the world's largest atoll, its lagoon extending 1,100 square miles, its combined land area totaling 5.6 square miles. Not nothing about it is quite natural.

Of its ninety-seven coral "islands," the largest, also called Kwajalein,

ped like a boomerang and domi-
d by a concrete slash of airstrip. Al-
ough the island has been alternate-
described as paradise, a country club,
some kind of state secret, what
kes the eye most upon approaching
the generic concrete structures,
fields of fuel and water tanks, the
rmous power plant of diesel gen-
tors, the radar station on the man-
ide Mt. Olympus, and the
lomes—white fiberglass and Teflon
eric spheres enclosing a variety of
ather, communications, radar, and
emetry instruments—that dot the
dscape like giant golf balls. The
hole place is only a half-mile wide
d three miles long, but from the
ne its overall scheme appears spare,
t subtraction of the tropical had
en the planners' aim. In a way it
s. Kwajalein's life as a missile-de-
nse test site began with the ABM
ojects of the late 1950s, when engi-
ers from Bell Laboratories and West-
n Electric used their hometowns in
burban New Jersey as the model to
lan a multiuse community that could
oot rockets on one end, provide
using and recreation on the other,
d store fuel in the center. Rockets no
nger lift off from this island, but the
sic features remain. There is the
lking Cold War–era shell of what
as to have been a radar facility but in-
ead became one of the world's most
pensive warehouses; a nine-hole golf
urse and a Scout camp, the athletic
lds, tennis courts, in-ground pools,
teboard course, and outdoor arena.
nly at the north end are palm trees
ickly bunched, and only at street
vel, under their canopy, does the res-
lential area come clearly into view, as
Kwajalein's secret is not so much its
ilitary apparatus as its colony of cin-
erblock bungalows, duplexes, four-
lexes, and aluminum trailers.

Kwajalein has the same telephone
rea code as Santa Barbara, California.
s two television channels, part of the
rmed Forces Radio and Television
ervice, advertise no products but in-
rsperse sports and past seasons' net-
ork sitcoms or dramas with instruc-
onal spots about American history or
state quiz about some little-known
ct from the annals of Utah or Texas
r Alabama. It is an Army base, but
nly 23 of its 2,300 residents are mili-
tary personnel. It is part of another
country, the Republic of the Marshall
Islands, but native people who provide



the sustaining labor are not allowed to
live here or to shop in most of the
stores. The American soldiers who do
live here, right on up to the comman-
der, make out their rent checks to the
Raytheon Corporation. Most everyone
else, from schoolteachers to doctors to
radar technicians and site managers,
lives rent free, and most are employed
by Raytheon, which holds the techni-
cal and logistical contracts that cover
almost every activity on the island. If
they are private-contract workers as
opposed to government employees,
they don't pay federal tax, and many
don't pay state tax either. Except for the
absence or near-absence of rent, taxes,
advertising, and residents who aren't
white, this is probably the most Ameri-
can place in the Pacific, the picture
of 1950s suburbia re-created on the un-
submerged rim of a sunken volcano.

"It's a really good place to live," a
young Marshallese worker barred from
living here told me, "but weird," as if
"all the buildings were built from the
same tree." An American contract
worker said that every time he returns
from a vacation he expects to see Rod
Serling on the runway, welcoming him
to the Twilight Zone. People get
around by bike or electric golf cart.
Women have sewing rooms. The local
vetted by the Army, and its journalists
work for Raytheon. At the Kwaj
Lodge, decals pasted on a surface of
the front desk promote military hard-
ware ("Discriminate and Destroy," de-
clares one from Raytheon). Nearby
stands the Marshallese Cultural Cen-
ter, a nice little museum commemo-
rating the history of the people who
used to live here.

Only about forty full-time workers
are directly engaged in N.M.D. here,
employed by the system's four main
contractors—Boeing, TRW, Raytheon,
Lockheed—and by the federal gov-
ernment, which oversees their work.
The other American residents work to
support the range or the base or their
spouses or their children. The Mar-
shallese, who tend the bars and the
cafeteria, clean houses, operate the
tractors, fix vehicles, unload freight, pre-
pare food, and come every day to Kwa-
jalein by boat from their homes on an
island called Ebeye (ē-bye) three miles
away, work to support this
economy.

Early in the morning Marshallese
women can be seen [illegible]
of palm and other debris scattered by
the night's [illegible]
Litter is nonexistent,
tually nonexistent. Americans joke
about the [illegible]

lands became part of the U.N. Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, given to the United States to rebuild and develop for "self-sufficiency" and "self-government." In 1947 the U.N. enjoined the United States to "recognize the principle that the interests of the inhabitants . . . are paramount, and accept as a sacred trust the obligation to promote to the utmost . . . [their] well-being." By that time the Navy had established Kwajalein as the command center for the [illegible] its harbor with fifty-one radioactive ships for the purpose of study. Two atomic bombs had been exploded at Bikini atoll, about 100 miles away, in Operation Crossroads. On the island of Rongerik, to which the people of Bikini had been removed, the coconut trees had stopped bearing fruit. By December of 1947 Navy doctors sent to examine the refugees there reported finding "a starving people." A few months later the Bikinians were again moved, to [illegible] variety of duties in support of the base that was irradiating their homeland. "American officials," wrote Leonard Mason, a Ph.D. candidate in anthropology at Yale in 1954, "considered this an excellent opportunity for instruction of Bikinians in the full meaning of Americanism, with an emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of the individual."

Watching today's American soccer moms and dads on Kwajalein root for their children, catching the scent of pine outside the high school as students organized caravans to deliver Christmas trees, sitting among patrons transfixed by television sets at the bar of the Yokwe Yuk Club (that's Marshallese for "Hello"), I felt that the Army command here was simply keeping the faith with promises long ago delivered. The iconic "small town in the Midwest" was the end product of a frontier experience, and, despite its suburban affect —even down to a display of [illegible] contemporary Kwajalein. It was [illegible] tents and Quonset huts when the first group of American wo[illegible] and children arrived in 1951 to [illegible] soldiers stationed here. They d[illegible] barked not far from the labor c[illegible] where 559 Marshallese lived. Th[illegible] bor camp was emptied. For [illegible] brown people of the Marshall[illegible] lands it was a kind [illegible] white flight that was simultaneo[illegible] creating suburbs [illegible] States: not having a ghetto in [illegible] Pacific against which to measu[illegible] from tenants, white [illegible] to create one.

The Marshallese were moved [illegible] Ebeye. It measures one eighth [illegible] square mile. Japanese census ta[illegible] counted sixteen people there[illegible] 1935. Before relocating the 559, [illegible] Navy cut down almost all of Ebe[illegible] trees and the scaveola bush that [illegible] served as some break from the co[illegible] sive salt breezes. The houses it b[illegible] were one-room wooden affairs w[illegible] out plumbing, but they were n[illegible] and new, and at the time, recal[illegible] one elderly woman, "we felt [illegible] lieved." On Kwajalein, where h[illegible] husband worked in personnel for [illegible] Navy, "everything was ruined, dev[illegible] tated, and you couldn't have a g[illegible] life." Yet within three years the Na[illegible] built houses for thirty-one Americ[illegible] families on Kwajalein, simple, sp[illegible] cious places with slatted woodw[illegible] and patios. It planted palm trees a[illegible] transplanted others whole from t[illegible] atoll's outer islands. It built a hos[illegible] tal, a school, a sewage system, t[illegible] Yuk Club, the Crossroads Clu[illegible] swimming pools, and a tiny depa[illegible] ment store dubbed Macy's. The Na[illegible] provided electricity and running w[illegible] ter and a ferry system to transport t[illegible] Marshallese workers, who with ea[illegible] passing day could witness transform[illegible] tions that, almost a half-century la[illegible] er, they have yet to experience. [illegible] 1999 the people of Ebeye had ru[illegible] ning water one day a week; it's up [illegible] an hour and a half a day now. At E[illegible] eye Hospital, doctors go home to u[illegible] the toilet during the day. Some an[illegible] bulatory patients do the same, hol[illegible] ing their intravenous bags aloft [illegible] they pick their way along rutte[illegible] roads. Every day Marshallese go t[illegible] Kwajalein's Echo Pier to draw wate[illegible] collecting it in plastic water-coole[illegible] bottles discarded by the American

[illegible] life, social, profes-

[illegible] don't cut your grass or don't put out the garbage properly, it will be re-

[illegible] reported to your superior. Teenagers caught drinking might be banished from the atoll, their parents given the choice of leaving with them or send-

[illegible] marijuana are immediately evicted. [illegible] tattooed, and beer con-

[illegible] sumption is extraordinarily high, ac-

[illegible] Army refused to release the figure.

"W[illegible] tell people that we will [illegible]

n five-gallon plaster-compound ps, hauling it onto the ferry and ne to Ebeye, now the second-est "city" in the Marshall Islands, whose 1999 census counted 9,345 souls.

Remember in the movie *Little Man*, Jack Crabb says, 'I wasn't just ying Injun, I was living Injun'" it's what we're doing here. We're ng missile defense." Hank Sikes, oversees work on the in-ceptor for the government whose wife, Gail, also works N.M.D., wasn't just prose-zing. Whether or not Amer-ns here work on the program, eir homes, their bars, the ool for their children, and e hospital for their sick—ne of it would exist but for ssile defense. In mainstream ateside discussion, every M.D. test is a discrete event a discrete program, now ijagined as President Bush's ogram, abstracted from his-try. But in Kwajalein every st is part of a chain of tests, aching back decades, pro-ting ceaselessly into the fu-e, and incomprehensible ex-pt as part of that chain.

For almost as long as there ve been modern missiles, ere have been programs for issile defense. In 1946 the Pen-gon awarded the first antibal-stic-missile contracts. Those rliest projects, Wizard and humper, are unmemorable but nd at the head of a genealo-of missile-defense efforts that ve had remarkable success re-oducing themselves over the years. r it might be said that Thumper and Wizard begat Nike II, which begat Nike-eus (also Nike-Ajax, Nike-Hercules, nd Plato); and Nike-Zeus begat Nike-, which begat Sprint and Spartan, and ey were known as Sentinel; and Sen-nel begat Safeguard, which begat oAD, which begat Sentry; and all of those, along with Defender and BAM BI and numerous forgotten others, be-gat Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative, and SDI was known as Star Wars, and it begat ERIS and HOE, which begat National Missile Defense.

Almost all of those systems were test-ed at Kwajalein, and it lends perspec-tive on the business of testing to know that not one of them worked, if "work-ing" were to be measured by the con-fidence with which even their staunchest supporters might bet on any of them in a robust nuclear exchange. Yet nothing that costs $133 billion—the estimated amount spent on missile defense across half a century—can really be said not to have worked to some end. Safeguard went beyond test-ing to deployment, the only project to do so, on September 28, 1975. That same day Congress realized it offered no security and voted to shut it down. When the system was deactivated, mis-sile-defense money diminished but nev-er ceased, just as it never ceased after it seemed that Star Wars had been put to



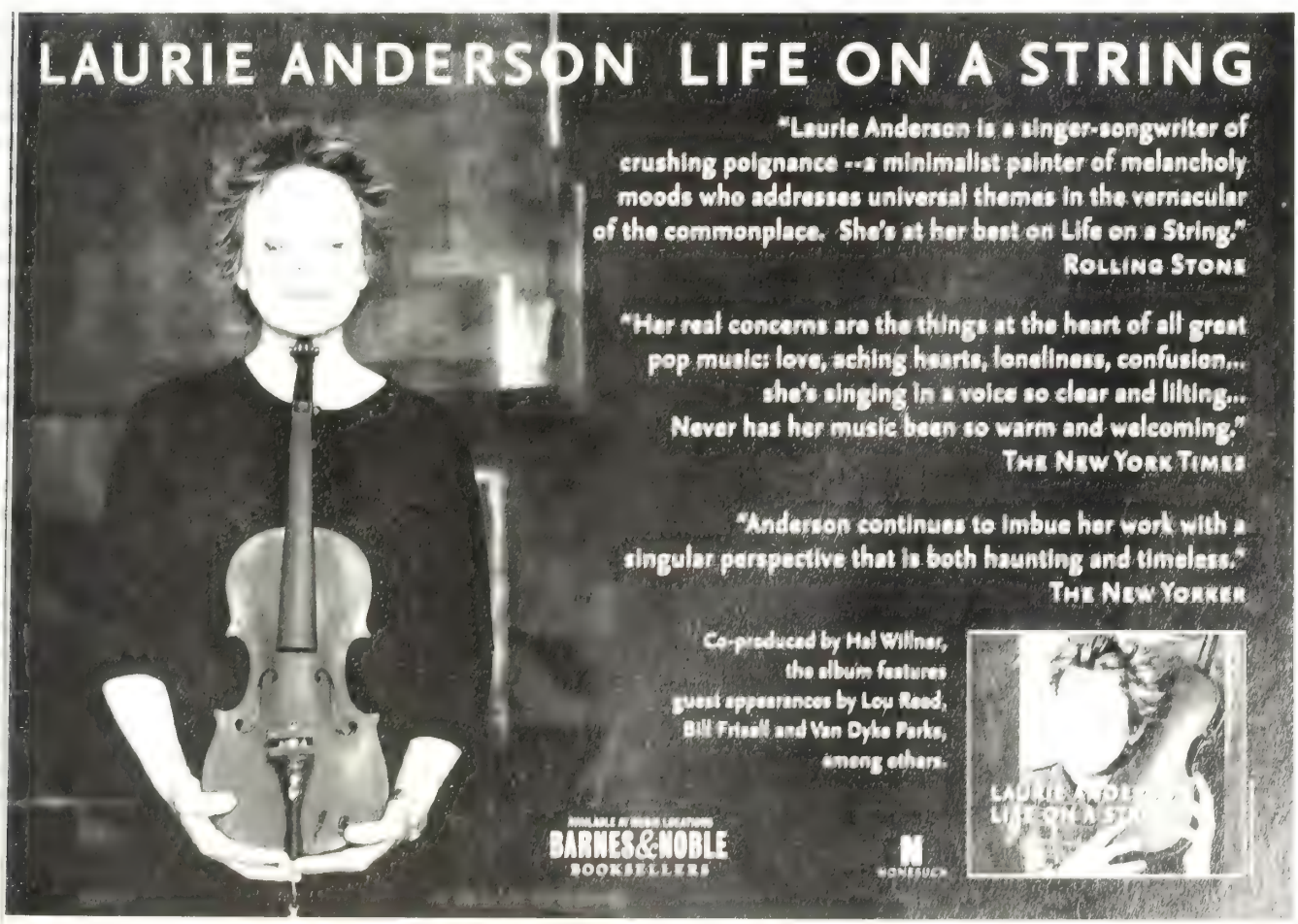


seer of N.M.D. on Kwajalein, and [illegible] like[illegible] plause but [illegible] scribe what was deemed a successful intercept by Ze[illegible] come [illegible] tended to be a nuclear weapon, "that" meant [illegible] the threat in space [illegible] that its the system [illegible] signed to counter, what was once called the "Nth Coun-try" missile [illegible] limited number of unsophisti-cated missiles [illegible] ing the deterrence rather than neutralizing it. The [illegible] N.M.D. system are more com-plex variations on a familiar theme [illegible] mains what it was in 1960, when President Eisenhower's Science Advisory Committee worried about the ability of the system to discriminate be-tween reentry vehicles and de-coys.

"What they're [illegible] fundamentally unchanged [illegible] 1964," Pierre Sprey, a retired weapons designer, [illegible] body thought the thing would work then, but that [illegible] it. All there is to Star Wars is a pipe between the Treasury and the con-tractors, a very low-tech sewer pipe."

Jim Hill, with an Alabama drawl and a mustache that shifts in amuse-ment, accenting the lines of irony in his speech, explains [illegible] "the thing" will work this time, but [illegible] takes his history straight. Of Reagan's Star Wars he says, "Well [illegible] anything; it was an era, not a syst[illegible] He and I were talking [illegible] tunities of missile defense while [illegible] a catamaran before dawn on [illegible] Kwajalein to Meck Island, to go

This is equivalent to 100,750 persons per square mile on Manhattan, 100,543 with recent building at ocean land. Kwajalein island has 44 persons per square mile. The Army reckons that Ebeye's population as of 2001 is closer to 13,500.


LAURIE ANDERSON LIFE ON A STRING
"Laurie Anderson is a singer-songwriter of crushing poignance --a minimalist painter of melancholy moods who addresses universal themes in the vernacular of the commonplace. She's at her best on Life on a String."
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BARNES&NOBLE
BOOKSELLERS
NONESUCH

I

...k took in the Pacific theater, is ... the preserve of a foreign pow... the "American Lake"—as were the ...et buffer states of Eastern Europe, ... the difference that here there ...ld be no dramatic dialectic between ...ssion and rebellion, neither secret ...e nor world recognized samizdat ...ire; just neglect, strategic depen...cy, and quiet death.

1963 confidential report to Pres... t Kennedy by Anthony Solomon, ...head of a special Survey Mission, re... the record to that point with a ...k frankness. After nearly twenty ...s of U.S. administration, Solomon ...te, the 81,000 people of Micrones... had a per capita income that, in ... terms, was one-third of what it had ... under the Japanese in 1939. The ...ensive public facilities" and "rela...ly prosperous economy" that Im...al Japan had built in the region had ...n left to rot through a program of ...eral net capital disinvestment." ...banized district centers" were for...te to be exposed to "the ways of the ...st, with alcoholic beverages, cha... dancing, cowboy movies, super...rket grocery stores and the habits ...American family and social life," but ... years after people had begun to be ...cinated in America, the scourge ...t had struck Ebeye and spread ...ough the Marshalls was polio.

Solomon was not so much con...ned that 190 cripples couldn't cha... as he was that anti-colonial winds ...re swirling about the globe. "We ...not give the area up," he counseled ...nnedy, "yet ... the time could come, ...d shortly, when the pressures in the ...ited Nations for a settlement of the ...tus of Micronesia could become ...re than embarrassing." He set out a ...n for making the region a U.S. ter...ory with "a reasonable appearance of ...f-government." There should be a ...biscite, he advised, and money ...uld be spent "to insure a favorable ...te." Of greatest concern:

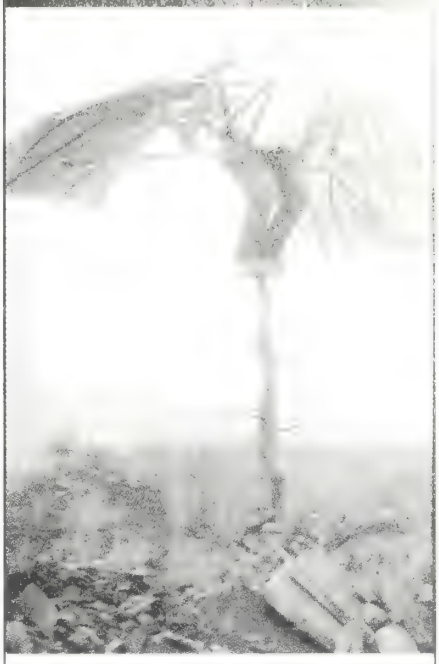
> It is the Mission's conclusion that ... those programs and the spending involved will not set off a self-sustaining development process of any significance in the near ... It is important, therefore, ... that advantage be taken of the psychological impact of the capital investment program before some measure of disappointment is felt.

In the end, even disappointment wouldn't matter. The territory's status wasn't fully sorted out until the 1990's. The world gave American colonialism in the Pacific a pass. Henry Kissinger best summed up this attitude in 1969 when he said, "There are only 90,000 people out there. Who gives a damn?" Throughout the region, U.S. bases would be built or expanded, rebellions would arise, more and more American dollars would be spent, a few Pacific leaders would grow rich, Solomon's plebiscite would never come to pass but nor would any self-sustaining development process.

The Trust Territory, amid some of the richest tuna waters in the world, would be caricatured by store shelves stocked with cans of Bumble Bee, Vienna sausages, and Spam. It would devolve into several semi-autonomous countries, the Republic of the Marshall Islands being only one. Now in the Marshalls, the "system," such as it is, is a mix of clientelism, capitalism, and feudalism. The R.M.I.'s first president, the late Amata Kabua, was singled out by Solomon as an up-and-comer the Americans could deal with. It helped that the Kabuas are the largest landowners on Kwajalein atoll. As Amata told the makers of the documentary *Home on the Range*, "When you grow up with your brother and he's a lot bigger than you, and he slaps you, what do you do? It's better to earn some money out of the situation than to do nothing."

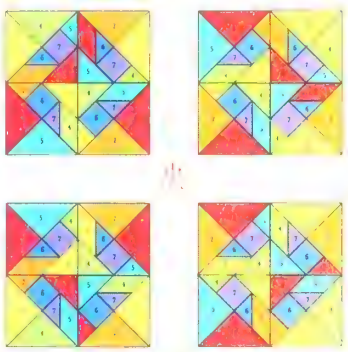
"Now, don't go writing a story about the poor Marshallese," Mike Dolan advised me; "they love Americans." Dolan has worked on the range since the 1970s, has known all the powerful Marshallese, had a common-law wife and a house on Ebeye, where they raised their children. We were on Roi-Namur—home of radars, World War II ruins, and about 200 Americans—watching native kids from the neighboring island line up to see Santa on a stage done up with images of fireplace and falling snow while "White Christmas" played in the background. I can't say about love or hate. It seemed more likely that for the Marshallese, America represents a kind of corruption of La Etao, the gift-giver and cunning trickster of is-

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S

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st 9/11, the Pentagon's Quadrennial Defense Review advocated expansion of missile defense to a "layered" system on land, air, and space. President Bush ng committed the country to what uggests will be a war without adaries and without end, it looks now as if all military and intelle wish lists might be satisfied lites and spies; "smart bombs" and cial Forces; Star Wars and Pashto se books

nd yet it is not enough to think of Wars simply as a sewer pipe to s makers, stripped of illusion, be- se illusion has been a weapon in arsenal of power for as long as ne men have schemed to control ers. In 1778, Hawaiians exclaimed ear and wonder as the night sky lit with the fireworks display Captain ok and his crew put on for them dful of being vastly outnumbered, ok had earlier ascertained, on the ount of his corporal, John Ledyard, t "our only defence was certainly imaginary greatness, and this uld unavoidably decline it not preved by some studied means." The ibution worked as intended, though y for a time. The Hawaiians recnized the fireworks as a mere performance of power and ultimately ed Cook, cutting him to pieces and arming his hands and bramless skill the stricken crew. In the long view, course, Cook won, not by fireworks even muskets but by his mere presce, his germs, his drawing of maps d charting of sea routes, his claim d the claim of all who followed him space.

Today's missile-defense advocates milarly take the long view. In Kwajein engineers compared themselves Columbus, and their critics to those ho said the Earth was flat. They were king about a technical challenge, t their choice of analogies parallels t of U.S. Space Command, which nages military "space assets" and reds NMD is but one weapon in an enal imagined necessary to make a ttlefield of space. In a document tid "Vision for 2020," the Space Comnders forthrightly trace their lineage to Europe's imperial navies during the rise of sea commerce and colonialism, and to the U.S. cavalry clearing the way for westward expansion. They speak of protecting "military and commercial national interests and investments in the space medium," and link the value of space to the persistence of U.S. dominance in a world where "the globalization of the world economy will also continue, with a widening gap between 'haves' and 'have-nots.'" In their "Long Range Plan," they point out that space-related industries are growing at about 20 percent a year and that in the next five years $500 billion will be spent worldwide on building and launching satellites, whose number is expected to quadruple by 2010. To the U.S. economy the space infrastructure contributes about $121 billion a year, and as goes the economy so goes Great Power military designs.

In an earlier age, the sea was the stage upon which imperial desires were projected. Explorers had mapped sea lanes, which created trade routes, which established markets and sources of raw materials, which required the protection of navies, which fought wars and made conquests. America entered the game in the Pacific in the 1890s, embracing Alfred Thayer Mahan's famous argument for U.S. naval development and international adventurism, *The Influence of Sea Power upon History*. In laying plans for "control of space," "dominating the space dimension," and "deny[ing] others the use of space," Space Command is only following tradition, substituting space for the sea, observing the satellite sky—the orbits charted like trade routes for exploration, weather satellites, navigation aides, surveillance, and communications systems—and responding in the way military men always have, justifying their existence while meeting the material and ideological needs of their superiors. Space Command has a particularly willing partner in President Bush. Last published "Vision for 2020" in 1997. Belief in America's entitlement to lasso, as it were, the common stuff of the world depends on nothing so trivial as party politics.

This all seems distant now, yet each

[redacted]

"Right now our satellite [redacted] French and [redacted] War I [redacted] while [redacted] Eventually, the [redacted] learned how to marshal air power for their own [redacted] power," the Air Force [redacted] tancy and . . . it is likely to follow the same evolutionary path."

Political supporters of N.M.D. rarely speak of the program apart from the larger project of controlling the heavens, what Senator Bob Smith calls "our moral legacy, our next Manifest Destiny." I had gone to Kwajalein because I wanted to see the place where missile defense lives a real life, where America's exercise of empire on Earth meets it and grows for space. I was probably standing on the parched wasteland of Launch Hill at about the time that, back in Washington, Smith was promising that the United States will militarize space in exactly the way it has militarized earth, and at about the time that a Marshallese man, woman, or child on Ebeye was noticing the first signs of what would turn out to be [redacted]

In his inaugural address this past January, President Bush called America "a slave-holding society that became a servant of freedom . . . a power that [redacted] the world to protect [redacted] powers to defend but not to conquer." In the tape recorder of my memory that statement is specific. It does not [redacted] moment of recollected time from Ebeye. It is [redacted] and in the [redacted] [redacted] the Kwajalein [redacted] white Americans in shirts and ties, barely more than boys really, from the Midwest and West, holding their Good Books and speaking easily, fraternally, in Marshallese [redacted] wind playfully in and out between their [redacted] They [redacted] church, [redacted] and perhaps I shouldn't be surprised, but I am when one of them, speaking of his acquaintance with Kwajalein and [redacted]

AMERIC

The tormenting face



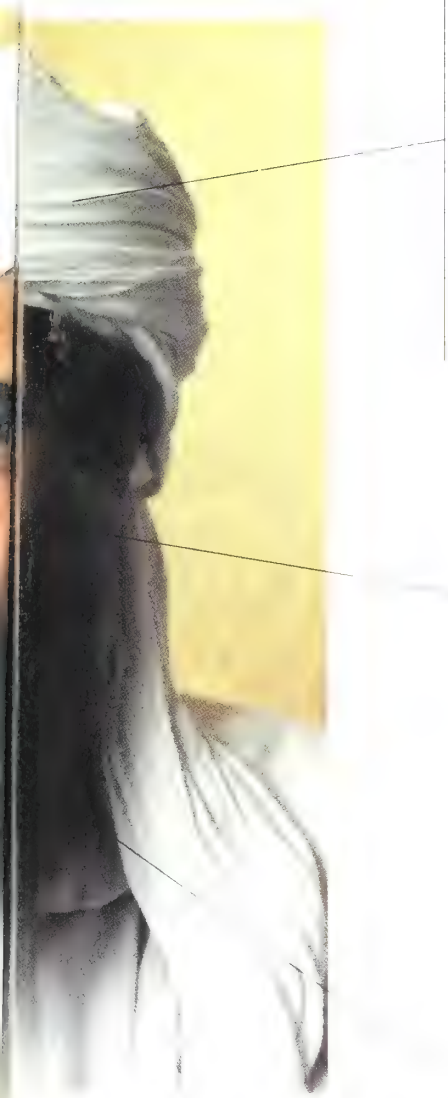
[illegible] what sustained [illegible] gable, screens the face [illegible] apparent decoys, those eerily cinematic collisions of airplanes and buildings—with a peculiar disjunction: an image of evil that attracts our eyes despite our minds' protestations. Of the foreign murderers who have stalked the imagination of America, he is perhaps the least fathomable. [illegible] does it this perplexity can be traced [illegible] his goals but to the bewildering [illegible] Where [illegible] news media would have us see a devil from the East, a sneering emissary of Islamic fanaticism, we instead meet a gaze both familiar and empathetic. His [illegible] never [illegible] even as he makes threats on our lives. His smile is that of a dear old friend.

[illegible] before photography held descriptive sway. Valeriano Weyler, the Spanish [illegible] (vilified by Hearst's New *York Journal*) helped provoke our 1898 war with Spain, was, as evidenced in photographs, a handsome man of fair complexion. [illegible] in Ethiopia as "a black apparition," while to a Hearst writer the eyes were "gray and cold," with a "suggestion of treachery" in their [illegible]. Pancho Villa, the Mexican insurgent who led raids on U.S. border towns, primarily through his caricature: a grinning, black-faced runt in a sombrero, eyes crazed and bulging. The *Washington Times* tried, on [illegible] to counter the instant image we already had seen them as they are: playful, even feminine, set deep under a delicately arched brow.

[illegible] classic enemies, e.g. Hitler and Stalin. Consider the mythmaking behind our last "wartime" villain, Saddam Hussein. After he overran Kuwait, the cover of *The New Republic*—as if to underscore a tortured analogy made by then-President Bush—digitally cropped Hussein's mustache to resemble Hitler's. The *Washington* [illegible] as if the elder dictator had advised the younger on his master's thesis), and *Time*'s icon for its Persian Gulf coverage was a cartoon rendition with black hair, beady eyes, and a bushy mustache. [illegible] this beard, free but neat, bespeaks a thoughtful piety. In- [illegible] Santa Claus, who, before devolving into our [illegible]

UCIFER

Laden, *by Bill Wasik*



Desperate to resolve face with deed, some Americans have turned to a crude racism, as the recent rash of anti-Arab and anti-Sikh violence can attest. For the very angry, turbans alone may be sufficient evidence of malice, much as were the eyes and skin of Japanese Americans during the Second World War. Indeed, a racist cast on our East Asian enemies persisted through Vietnam and beyond. In 1948, Ho Chi Minh was, to *Time*, "goat-bearded," a "Mongoloid Trotsky"; twenty years later a *Reader's Digest* piece ("The Blood-Red Hands of Ho Chi Minh") relied on a primitivist sketch: a misshapen head with downcast eyes and mangy goatee. For today's racists the face of this man, with its turban and beard, can perhaps be equated with that of the Ayatollah Khomeini, but most of us cannot take such solace—the face lacks Khomeini's hawklike brow, his tyrant's eyes. Instead it has, both in features and in fact, the cosmopolitan mien of an Arab ex-playboy, a club-hopper all grown up.

A mangled soul should, we assume, reveal itself in a mangled face. Like Chaucer's Summoner, the Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega wore his corruption on his repulsive skin, on his "*cara de piña*" ("pineapple face"). The face of Stalin, in a 1948 profile in *Look* magazine—which six years earlier had called him "the 'easy boss' type"—now bore "deep circular pock marks"; his forehead "slope[d] backward," and his smile "showed short teeth, many of which were blackened or gold-capped." Before American bombs fell on Tripoli, Muammar Qaddafi's jowls were, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, "creased with sinuous lines that called to mind the dunes of the desert where he was born." Unlike Qaddafi, born to a poor Bedouin farmer, the bearer of this face was born to a quarter-billion-dollar fortune; his skin is appropriately creamy, his teeth straight and white.

At times broad, at times narrow, his smile is always warm and mannered, the token of a moneyed ease. If we fail to see villainy in his physiognomy, could it be we are misled by the markings of his affluence—his six-foot frame, nurtured by a princely diet; his classic features, buttressed by a Western-caliber medicine? After all, he beset us at a time when good looks had come increasingly to signify wealth—when personal trainers, plastic surgeons, and orthodontists stood ready to correct God's oversights, while an obesity epidemic raged chiefly among the poor—and when wealth, in turn, had come to signify a pure heart, when a "millionaire" was someone who lived next door and "rich" was something it took courage to be. A blessed child of the global economy, Osama bin Laden cast himself out of a contented lifestyle quite like the one we had desired and had, in large part, attained. Today contentment is denied us, disquieted as we are by the face of a confounding devil—our American Lucifer, fallen archangel of Western prosperity.

Wasik is an assistant editor of Harper's Magazine

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TEMPLE STREAM

Of sumac, sewage, tires, and time

By Bill Roorbach



e Brook

come from haunts of coot and hern,
make a sudden sally
nd sparkle out among the fern,
bicker down a valley.

y thirty hills I hurry down,
r slip between the ridges
y thirty thorps, a little town,
nd half a hundred bridges.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson

The Temple Stream flows southeast the Sandy River, which flows east to e Kennebec, which meets and ab- ries the Androscoggin yet farther east Bath, just before flowing in estuary the Gulf of Maine near Revolu-

ll Roorbach's most recent book is The smallest Country *(Down East Books, Press, 2001).*

tionary Fort Popham. This much knowledge I could have gotten from a road map. But standing that first day at the banks of our stream (call it our stream), standing watching and listening to *our stream* as it sought through the flats that are my dairying neighbor's hayfields and pastures, standing there dreaming a future, I hadn't yet looked at a map, hadn't yet gotten involved, been taken in, absorbed at once and for good with our stream. I have done that since, but then—October 2, 1992—I only stood looking, happy that suddenly we lived here, Juliet and I, that in our new back yard (our extended back yard, not ours at all) was something as sweet as this, as wet and green.

Where the stream went (its future, so to speak), I had no idea. Where it came from (its past), something. What lived in it, one of the first creatures you meet in the middle of his

course, that flat-top-stocked [illegible] that is [illegible] acquaintance?

The time August [illegible] to look for the mouth of the Temple [illegible] I knew approximately where it is: somewhere on the Sandy River below our town, Farmington, Maine. There's nowhere else it could be, and on maps that's where the blue lines meet. Add to that clue last summer's sudden insight: the dark, pooled stream [illegible] Routes 2&4, a.k.a. the Wilton Road [illegible] strip hereabouts, and, if you keep going, it's the road west to the White Mountains and New Hampshire. I craned my neck for a look up the stream, quick peeks from a car's thirty-five miles an hour, all I got.

B

... Butler reports in his *A History ... ington, Maine* (published ... in 1853):

... ps ... describe Pierpole ... who ... scribe him ... a medium height, ... ad in the shoulders, straight, strong ... d lithe. His features were comely, ... eyes black and ... He dresses ... re the dress of the aborigines. ... my attempts were made to induce ... n to adopt a European costume, but ... vain. Once he progressed so far as ... put on a pair of buckskin breeches ... the earnest solicitation of his ... nds, but the restraint was too great. ... too much for him," said Pierpole.

... addle on the Mussul Unsquit put in ... stic canoe to a huge sandbar ... resolves into a gravel-pit tail- ... bar printed sinuously with ma- ... ery tread marks and the ruts of ... s. There's water backed up be- ... if the gravel bar but not a stream. ... ich the canoe and walk up for a ... : nothing—large puddles, gravel ... anicked, lots of sand of increasing ... ness, mounded.

... ut suddenly I get the old flash: ... s is it. This is the Temple ... am. I'll have to look at my maps ... e sure, but this is our stream ... ing around its own delta like the ... itself, or the Mississippi, and if I ... going down the sandy Mussul ... quit I'll find the primary branch. ... s, why'd I start so late in the day! ... downstream then), downstream ... 't be far, and there'll be an open- ... unless ... wait ... unless this gravel ... is soaking up the whole stream, ... whole stream draining into the Sandy through gravel, and therefore hidden.

... n *A Week on the Concord and ... rimack Rivers*, old Henry David ... oreau says, "[B]y one bait or an- ... er, Nature allures inhabitants in- ... ll her recesses."

... le means you'll find something ... g wherever you look. It's hard ... w to look at, say, a Subway sand- ... h shop in its mall or gas station or ... hway-strip store and realize that ... ething about nature has allured it ... re. But in New England, at least, ... roads follow our streams—valleys ... ke nice rights-of-way and simple ... ilding. And the sandwich shop ... st sit on the road, preferably a main road, one way or the next. And the main roads are the oldest, and the oldest most likely stream bound.

I paddle on, around the gravel pit (not that's one thing it is), around the delta of the Temple (that's the more glorious thing it is), which is enormous for such a small stream, real acreage, generations of gravel operators allured and enriched, their two-centuries' dent in the lucrative sands of the millions of years impressive but by no means exhaustive. I paddle the long way around this thing, thinking of the fact, newly learned, that the deposits at the delta of the Mississippi are *25,000 feet deep*. How deep these? How much of the former glory of Mt. Blue (now a mere 3,200 feet tall) is in this pile from our stream? And how much of our neighbor's field? And how much, come to think of it, of every plant and house and animal and person and all the hills and all of everything that's been in the area for how many years?

I keep thinking I must be coming around this small delta to the true mouth of the Temple, but the damn delta keeps coming, this one more truly a square, or, if you think dimensionally and geologically, a cube. The Sandy swings hard to port perhaps 300 yards, makes a sharp turn starboard, then flows steady maybe 500 yards to the next delta angle. I paddle happily, big beech forest to port, which happens to be more or less north at this point. And not a small stench. Oh, yes, the Farmington Sewage Treatment plant—that'll be one of the holding ponds, here on the second Minister's Lot. Then there's the outflow pipe, flowing nicely, about ten inches in diameter (this is a small town, and not everyone's on town water—so the pipe's small, too)—faint smell of chlorine, the town anus perfumed. The plant itself is hidden by the high banks here.

Downstream I turn back curious and see a small plant doing a hard job well. I'm not sure if there's a better answer. Though not all towns are 7,000 people small. And even if only 7,000—how will I feel about swimming downstream having seen just this little bit and ... ? ... isn't every ... every town, from ever ... [illegible] ... ter, ... off to port, and if my ... correct and ... teen minutes of my limited ... paddle time, the Temple should be ahead to starboard. I paddle just a little faster than the Sandy flows. And yes, that little indent is our stream, for sure, a flat water, very deep, barely flowing. Pierpole has been here, the historians say, tradition says; he poled his way upstream, past the site my house would soon enough be built upon (but not ... poled and dragged his ... finally hid it in the rushes ... his way to Day Mountain, the proximate headwaters of our stream, where it is said Pierpole had a secret: a lode of soft lead for his bullets.

The Mussul Unsquit drinks all this new water, drinks this Temple Stream as nothing, and continues on, rushing through a rapids I'd actually like to ride down, treated sewage or no. But I turn into our stream. The feeling comes over me somehow of visiting an ancestor's hometown, the portentous and melancholy feeling I associate with reading lichened gravestones bearing familiar names in cemeteries far away, a river's mouth being last things, too, disgorging what's been eaten. I'm inordinately excited by this meeting of the end. It's our stream, all right, but a stranger too, and no stream of its own as it flows on after this. A continuous death!

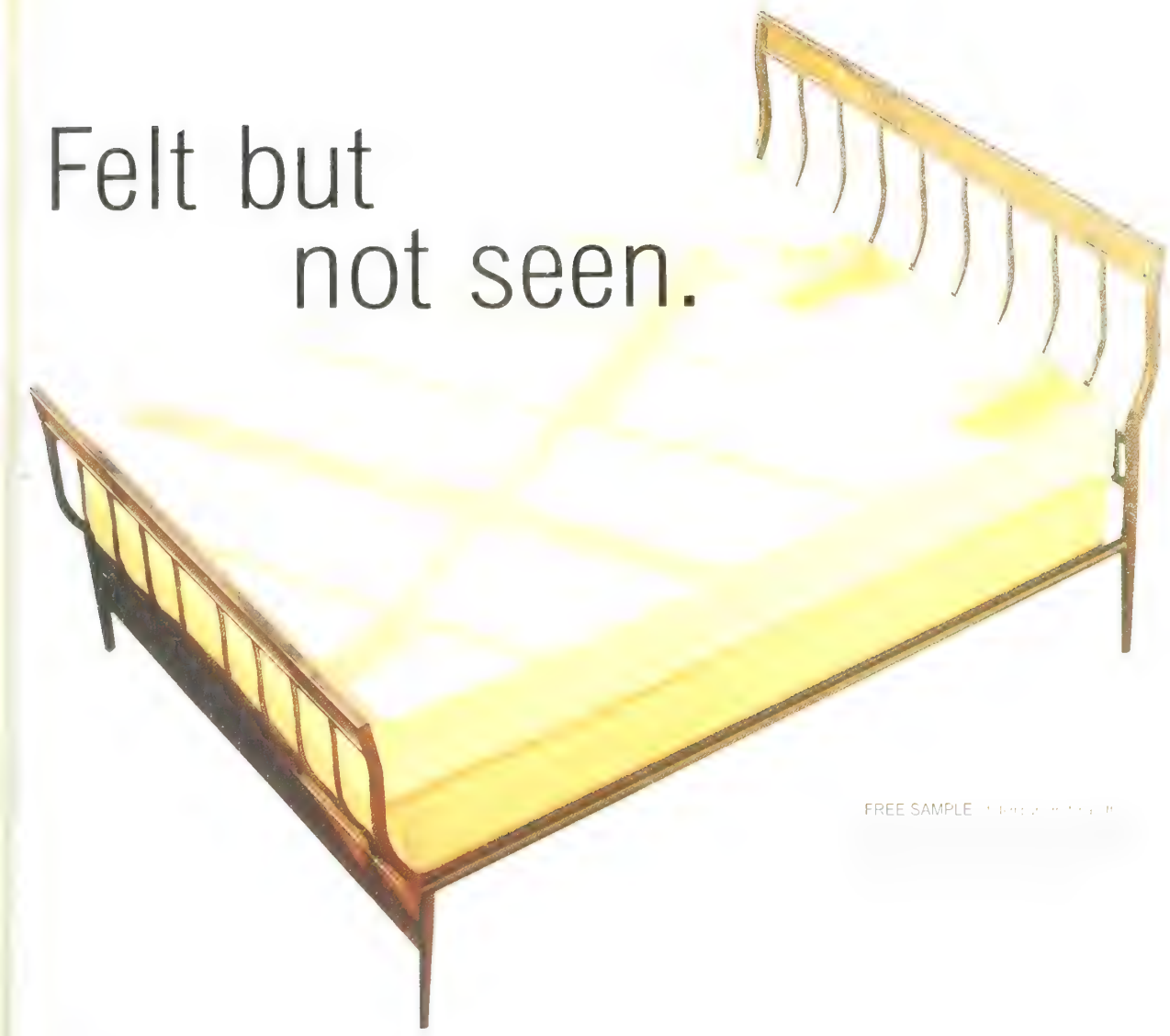
Then again, what is a stream but drainage? Off this side of Day Mountain, off this side of Mt. Blue and Spruce Mountain, freshet ... les, rivulets, all ... brooks that find the Temple not a lot bigger than they: Jessie, Grant, Conant, Holman, Edes, ... Mitchell, Henry Mitchell, ... (most named after dead farms). But brooks add up and, brook by brook, make of the Temple a ... Dammit, ... something ... think about how ...

Pierpole roamed up ... his ... his lead, shot his game, collected ...

The water at the mouth of the Temple Stream is darkish, a burnt color, stained with leaf tannins, probably, a flat water for several hundred yards, backed up behind gravel-pit shapes that form dams and spillways: pushed mounds, scraped declivities, tread ruts from huge tires and bulldozer tracks, steam-shovel scoops, rock piles, and, most imposingly, a carefully flattened and maintained ford for the machines. I was a boy once, I know what this is: it's a sandbox. I have to pick the canoe up and over several tailings bars, each portage more progress upstream and nowhere.

Mourning doves are used to human activity here; they don't startle at my presence or at the noisy canoe over

Felt but not seen.



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us accompanied, I paddle to
my heavy lode on Day Moun-
—deep pools, short riffles be-
, get out and pick up the canoe,
ing my ten-dollar counterfeit
sandals, thinking I should prob-
have worn something tougher,
ick up the canoe or simply drag
the gravel, then paddle a hun
feet more of pool, drag another
I'm not a hundred feet from the
at times, and about forty feet
below it where it passes in front
new offices of the *Franklin Jou*
our sweetly local twice-weekly
spaper (published since 1840,
not always at this site; headlines
"Cemetery Needs New Trees"),
across the highway from me. A
of huge sugar maples undermined
ood hang over the stream. The
est has fallen in after probably a
hundred-year reign on the banks
, has draped itself clear across
stream, propped up on its own
k branches below, furniture-
oth above from springtime scrapes
ice and rushing flood-time baths
and-laden water.

wkwardly as hell get out of the ca-
and onto the log over hip-deep
er, balance on the prodigious tree
k, pull the boat over it in a clean,
ng motion even while using the
wales to keep my balance, splash
t back in, flop back into boat my-
recover my paddle, and onward.
eper like that would kill you dead
ou were coming downstream in
water.

our tires so far.

marked crow flies by, heavy white
e in its wing: the scientists are at
k somewhere within the bird's
rmous range. Or maybe this bird
has a pure white wing primary,
so unusual, from what I hear,
ugh nothing I've seen clearly my-
unless I'm seeing it now. A sign of
dom, this white feather, tradition
s us. Unless it's paint.

The road is right there, loud, but I
invisible, wild, private, alone with
atever wisdom I can muster. I'm
vn below Ryan's, which is a sports
(of all things), a sports bar in a
et-steel box building. I'm so close I
could leave this wild place for that one, just a climb up the muddy bank fifty or seventy feet, old wheels and engine blocks as handholds, ascend to Ryan's parking lot, float over the asphalt, push the plate-glass door with my palm, jauntily order a Manhattan—maybe tell the barkeep how to *make* a Manhattan—drink it, drink another, barking pleasantries about the sports event at hand, then step outside dramatically and walk off the edge of their world and back to mine, disappear into the foliage and off the cliff pleasantly potted.

I note a couple more whole cars hanging off the clitty banks, I believe they predate Ryan's by more than several decades.

A robin, bless him, pokes the gravel bar, no lawn bird he. Rusty blackbirds probe the mud, bright yellow eyes focused on their feed, then heads cocked to check me out: benign, boys, so back to work. Buzz and song of red-winged blackbirds, though I cannot see them. Pretty hubcaps, smooth-edged bricks, bull broken china, beer bottles, these last not old. Beer cans, ditto, though wait, here's one with removable pop-top, which dates it 1970s, and then just the steel top-disk of a can opened with a church key, back when? 1960s at the latest. Wild cucumbers climbing and winding through a copse of red willow, spiny fruit dangling and dry. The bridge is right up here somewhere, has to be close. I'm meandering along with the stream, wholly absorbed, evening coming down softly. I've got to make the bridge! But don't really want to be paddling upstream back on the Sandy in the dark, paddling hungry among the Mussul Unsquit shades.

Muskrat. He doesn't see me right away, doesn't hear me with all the bridge-traffic white noise up ahead; he just calmly swims ahead of me carrying a big leaf and stem from a weed I recognize from my childhood bog adventures but can't name (and won't find in any book, as it turns out, at least not yet: very large leaf, substantial stem—I drew a bad picture of it and can't forget it). Let's call it muskrat weed, hell. He trails this food alongside himself, paddling very quietly and slowly, no hurry, no rush. Just another rodent

[illegible]

contact, which he holds a second, then simply hurries a little—no panic. He's a bridge brat. What's a canoe to him who's seen a hundred eighteen-wheelers an hour his whole daytime life?

I paddle over the muskrat tree.

My speed is slightly greater than Muskrat's (musquash, the Abenaki called him, and so Thoreau), and I gain on him. When I get too close, he drops his leaf and hurries faster—still no panic, no dive—and twenty feet farther ducks easily into the mud bank. I pull up at the next riffle, which flows under a fallen oak, just sit a minute, holding a dead branch to keep me steady against the bole. At the fat end of the oak where it most influences the flow of the stream, a gravel bar has formed. And right there I spy two baby muskrats, about one-third adult size, clearly new in the world. They see me at the moment I see them, and startle, but mildly. They're cute (is the only word), bump into each other, then hurry toward me. They rush headlong and ill-advisedly *toward* me along the gravel bar, then duck under the oak trunk, where at last they are hidden from me. I think they're going to stay there, but soon here they come swimming, screwing their tails, matter-of-fact glances at me, no diving at all, swim across the stream and under the cut bank. And that's not the end of it, either. One little face peers out and investigates me. I ought to throw something or hiss or even howl like a monster to teach him about the danger of people, but can't bring myself to be the bad example. Instead I climb out at their gravel bar and go about pulling the canoe over the log, making as much noise as possible. But when I get to the upstream side I look back to the cut bank, and there's that little head peering out, and now his sidekick next to him.

It is nice to be of interest.

Onward. Into the next pool. (Tire number six, half buried there in the bank.) I've been paddling one hour. It's seven o'clock and I really ought to be home making dinner. I figure it won't be the whole hour back—I'll

and flying a mile to the west was there when we arrived. Some will say we

overhead, drivers intent on the forward. No bobbing head of the walker

one looks my direction. I am as a muskrat to them: invisible. And I try to be a muskrat back: oblivious, merely

Oddly, there's no path down from the road on any of the four corners of the bridge. Always around a bridge like this there's a path worn by little kids or fishing people or both. Not here, not yet. Ahead some remnant of the old bridge, rotten concrete, this built over the remnants of an even older bridge: river stones and hand-drilled quarry granite. Somewhere under there perhaps

and built for 150 bushels of grain. How many bushels of grain did we pay for this one? People rush not twenty feet overhead—weird when

a minute. Still, twenty feet from all those cars, I have the feeling of isolation. I'm sitting in an old place that lives on like a troll under the new

minute. Yes: the stream is safer forgotten, and maybe I am too. I'm Pierpole for the moment, I'm a leopard frog, I'm the stream.

The sun has set, the dusk is upon us.

Tire number seven: a big truck tire well buried by sediments. The stream flowing over it makes a distinctly round hump in the water.

But after the bridge there's a nice deep pool, long and dark, the very pool

ing above, such a smooth, long pool

seen around the bend. Around the bend—that's where the answers are. There's a beaver stick caught up against

gainst the canoe, gnawed sharp at both ends, tapered nicely from about

ghostly pale, almost glowing

dusk. This I lean out of the b

pick up: I love a good stick.

And next thing I know I'm

ing up and poling. The beaver

is perfect, sleek and strong. Wh

I can see is orange, clouds bu

up grandly; chill in the air, ch

my wet feet. But it's summer—

dark can it get? I'm practica

town. How far can I be from co

and safety? I could walk home

hour, flapping, not to worry,

won't walk. Pierpole must have

out on the river at night oft

that's the time to hunt racco

will make my way back by star

invisible

At the head of the long poo

of sight of the bridge, I encour

bricks making their own red-o

gravel. Dumped here? Colla

here? (Later, in the midst of

research, I'll be reading about a

and in West Farmington and

slowly come to realize that it wa

uated on the bluff just above he

goodly operation back in the

nineties of the nineteenth cen

dense-walled beehive kilns, br

and gutter pipe and roofing t

every project local, every econ

your neighbor's! My god—my

taps along a brick-bottomed str

detritus hardly counting for po

tion: the stream's clay has me

been baked. What's funny is that

source clay is more permanentl

place than the bricks someone

burned it into. That orangy vein

be here always, at least in hu

terms, always until our star explo

that long at least. But the bricks,

ten, the bricks are moving do

stream like any old throwing r

moving a millimeter here, a foo

flood, giving up molecule after at

to the flow, getting polished rou

in a thousand years to be comple

broken down and rolled to the C

of Maine as reddish sand, rolled

the sea and pounded and washed

ground and digested, broken dow

raw materials for some scruffy hu

of life, moved by water to the st

ach of some eternal starfish but n

er altogether gone and always of

stream.

LOVE AND HYDROGEN

By Jim Shepard

Imagine five or six city blocks ould lift, with a bump, and float w. The impression the 804-foot ng *Hindenburg* gives on the ground that of an airship built by giants d excessive even to their purposes. he fabric hull and main frame rve upward sixteen stories high.

Meinert and Gniss are out on the ngway ladder down to the star ard #1 engine car. They're helping t the machinists, in a pinch. Gniss atrand of heights, which amuses ryone. It's an open aluminum lad r with a single handrail extending ghteen feet down into the car's tchway. They're at 2,000 feet. The uds below strand by and dissipate. 's early in a mild May in 1937.

Their leather caps are buckled un- their chins, but they have no ggles. The air buffets by at eighty- ve miles per hour. Meinert shows nuss how to hook his arm around he leading edge of the ladder to ep from being blown off as he aves the hull. Even through the heepskin gloves the metal is shock- gly cold from the slipstream. The ter suede of the grip doesn't pro- de quite the purchase they would ish when hanging their keister out ver the open Atlantic. Every raised oot is wrenched from the rung and ung into space.

Servicing the engines inside the upola, they're out of the blast but not he cold. Raising a head out of the hielded area is like being cuffed by a ear. It's a pusher arrangement, thank God. The back end of the cupolas are open to facilitate maintenance on the blocks and engine mounts. The engines are 1,100 horsepower diesels four feet high. The propellers are twenty feet long. When the men are down on their hands and knees adjusting the vibration dampers, those props are a foot and a half away. The sound is like God [illegible] his temper, [illegible] drums in the [illegible] but in the [illegible]

Meinert and Gniss [illegible] Regensburgers. Meinert was in his twenties and Gniss a child during the absolute worst years of the inflation. They lived on mustard sandwiches, boiled kale, and turnip mash. Gniss's most cherished toy for a year and a half was a clothespin on which his father had painted a face. They're ecstatic to have found positions like this. Their work fills them with elation, and the kind of spuriously proprietary pride that [illegible] tour guides might feel at Olympus. Meals that seem giddily baronial—plates crowded with sausages, tureens of soups, platters of venison or trout or buttered potatoes—appear daily, once the passengers have been served, courtesy of Luftschiffbau Zeppelin. Their sleeping berths, aboard and ashore, are more luxurious than any other place they've previously laid their heads.

Meinert and Gniss are in love. This complicates just about everything. They steal moments when they can—on the last Frankfurt to Rio run, they exchanged an intense and acrobatic series of caresses 135 feet up inside the superstructure when Meinert was supposed to have been checking a seam on one of the [illegible] for water, their clothes [illegible] clacking and clocking together—but mostly their ardor is channeled so smoothly into mid-ground stuff that even their siblings, watching them work, would be satisfied with their restraint.

Meinert [illegible] himself with detail, by his methodical attack with all schedules and plans, the way he seems to husband good feeling and pass it around among his shipmates. He [illegible] Gniss takes in all meals, and watches [illegible] the enthusiasm that an enthusiast might bring to a sublime stretch of *Aida*. Gniss [illegible] but [illegible] groups. At the base of his neck so it's hidden by a collar he has a tattoo of a figure eight of rope: an infinity sign. He's exceedingly well proportioned.

Gniss loves Meinert's shoulders, [illegible] worthy of a Johnny Weissmuller, and the way he can play the irresponsible daredevil and still erode others' disapproval or righteous indignation. He's open-mouthed at the way Meinert flaunts the [illegible] and [illegible] that all mothers warn against. In his bunk at night, Gniss sometimes [illegible] *qualities*, for fear of agitating himself too completely. He calls Meinert "Old Shatterhand." They joke about the age difference.

[illegible] this case would begin at the loss of

Jim Shepard [illegible] Nosferatu (Knopf, 1998). *His new story collection will [illegible]*

knates—what was

wishing they'd risked it. As a consola-

grandfather's antique silver pocket

Meinert considers him to have been well named. He whistles the same

Gnuss turns this way and that in his aluminum bunk in the darkness. The ship betrays no tremor or sense of movement as it slips through the sky

He is proud of his feelings for the number of people he's known he believes to be capable of feelings as

Meinert, meanwhile, has devel- sengers: perhaps the only relation- forbidden than his relationship with Gnuss. The flirtation alternately irri- tates and frightens Gnuss.

The passenger is one of those lan- guid teen-agers who own the world. She has a boy's haircut. She has a boy's chest. She paints her lips but

ents are briskly polite with the crew early excited by their first ad-

...ladd'...sparking tow pistol: anything that might mix apocalyptically with their ship's seven million cubic feet of hydrogen. Two hundred stevedores in the ground crew were arrayed every ten feet or so around the airship's perimeter, dragging slightly back and forth on their ropes with each shift in the wind. Meinert made a joke about drones pulling a queen. The late afternoon was blue with rain and fog. A small, soaked Hitler Youth contingent with two bedraggled Party pennants stood at attention to see them off.

Meinert was handed Tereska's valise, and Tereska wrestled it back, rummaging through it shoulder to shoulder with him. They'd given

The two friends finished their inspections and waited at attention until all the passengers were up the gangway. "Isn't she the charming little rogue," Gnuss remarked. "Don't scold, Auntie," Meinert answered.

...ed. Loved ones who came to see the travelers off waved and shouted. A passenger unbuckled his wristwatch and tossed it from one of the observation windows as a farewell present. Meinert and Gnuss were the last ones aboard and secured the gangway. Two thousand pounds of water ballast was dropped. The splash routed the ranks of the Hitler Youth contingent. At 150 feet the signal bells of the engine telegraphs jangled, and the engines one by one roared to life. At 300 feet the bells rang again, calling for higher revolutions.

On the way to their subsequent duties, the two friends took a moment at a free spot at an observation window and watched the ground recede. The passengers were oohing and aahing as the mountains of Switzerland and Austria fell away to the south, inverted in the mirrorlike expanse of the lake. The ship lifted with the smoothness of planetary motion.

...come a pair of stupefying narratives. Frankfurt to Rio in three and a half days. Frankfurt to New York in two. The twenty-five passenger cabins on A deck slept two in stateroom com- fort and featured featherlight whisper-quiet sliding doors. O deck passengers could lather u the world's first airborne shower. smoking room, off the bar and c ble-sealed all the way round, sta open until the last guests said g night. The fabric-covered walls the lounge and public areas were c orated with hand-painted artw Each room had its own theme: main salon, a map of the world cr hatched by the routes of famous plorers; the reading room, scenes the history of postal delivery. An a minum bust of General von Hind burg sat in a halo of light on ebony base in a niche at the top the main gangway. A place sett for two for dinner involved fifty-ei pieces of Dresden china and silv The handles of the butter kni were themselves mini zeppeli Complimentary sleeping caps w bordered with the legend *Aus B Des Luftschiffes Hindenburg*. Lugg tags were stamped *Im Zeppelin U Den Ozean* and featured an image the *Hindenburg* bearing down, m ocean, on what look like the *Santa Maria*.

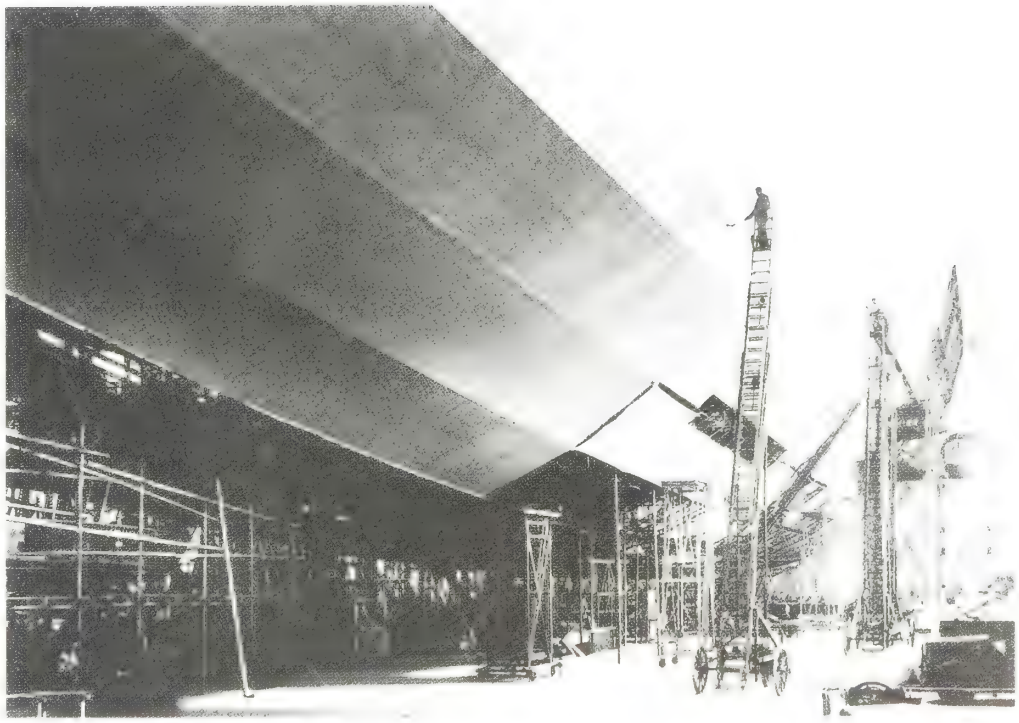
When he can put Tereska out his head, Gnüss is giddy with t danger and improbability of it a The axial catwalk is 10 inches wi at its base, 782 feet long, and vertig nously high above the passenger a crew compartments below. Cre members require the nimbleness structural-steel workers. The top the gas cells can only be inspect from the top of the vertical ringe ladders running along the inflatic pipes, sixteen stories up into the r dial and spiraling bracing wires ar main frame. Up that high, the ai ship's interior seems to have its ow weather. Mists form. The vast ce walls holding the seven million c bic feet of hydrogen billow and flex.

At the very top of Ladder #4 o the second morning out, Meine hangs from one hand. He spins slow ly above Gnüss, down below wit the glue pots, like a high-wire ac seen at such a distance that all th spectacle is gone. He sings one of h songs from the war, when as a sever teen-year-old he served on the LZ 9

bombed London
the winds let them
it. His voice is a
ig echo from above:

I Paris people shall e all
ver
I envy as they wait
e Count prefers to
come at night,
I pect us at half past
ight'

Gnüss nestles in and his
On either side of the
talk, great tanks carry
,200 pounds of diesel
and water. Alongside
anks, bays hold food
ppies, freight, and mail.
is one of his favorite
s to steal time. He and
lbert sometimes linger
e for the privacy and the
excuses—inspection
rrands—that all this
ge space affords.



ood news: Meinert signals that
e located a worn patch, necessi
ng help. Gnüss climbs to him
another glue pot and a pot of
gelatin latex used to render the
evy-duty sailmaker's cotton gas-
tight. His erection grows
as he climbs.

heir repairs complete, they're
n strapped in on the ladder near
top, mostly hidden in the gloom
curtaining folds of the gas cell.
iss, in a reverie after their love-
ing, asks Meinert if he can lo-
the most ecstatic feeling he's
r experienced. Meinert can. It
when he'd served as an observer
night attack on Calais.

Gnüss still has Meinert's warm sex in
hand. This had been the LZ 98,
trained by Lehmann, Meinert re-
ds him. They'd cotten nowhere on
nt for fogbound targets in England,
conditions over Calais had been
d for the observation basket: thick
d at 4,000 feet, but the air beneath
talline. The big airships were much
when operating above cloud. But
how to see their targets.'

The solution was exhilarating: on
ir approach they throttled the mo-
s as far back as they could while re-
ning the power to maneuver. The zeppelin was leveled out at 500 feet above the cloud layer, and then, with a winch and a cable, Meinert, as Air Observer, was lowered nearly 2,000 feet in the observation basket, a hollow metal capsule scalloped open at the top. He had a clear view downward, and his gondola, so relatively tiny, was invisible from the ground.

Dropping into space in that little bucket had been the most frightening and electric thing he'd ever done. He'd been swept along alone under the cloud ceiling and over the lights of the city like the messages of the dead.

The garrison of the fort had heard the sound of their motors, and all the light artillery had begun firing in that direction. But only once had a [illegible] startled him with its crash.

His cable had extended up above his head into the darkness and murk. It had bowed forward, the capsule trailed from the pull. The wind had streamed past him. The lights had rolled by below. From his wicker seat he had directed the immense invisible ship above by telephone, and had set and reset their courses by eye and by compass. He had crisscrossed them over the fort for forty-five minutes, signaling when to drop their small bombs and phosphorus incendiaries. The experience had been that of a magician's, or a sorcerer's, hurling thunderbolts on his own. That night he'd been a regular Rasputin. The bombs and incendiaries had detonated on the railroad station, the warehouses, and the [illegible] When they'd fallen they'd spiraled silently out of the darkness above and had plummeted past his capsule, the explosions always carried away behind him. Every so often luminous ovals from the fort's searchlights had rippled the bottoms of the clouds like a hand lamp beneath a tablecloth.

Gnüss, still hanging in his harness [illegible] by the cable. He and Meinert [illegible] had only opened pants.

"That feeling comes back to me in memory when I'm my happiest: hiking or alone," Meinert muses. "And when I'm with you as well," he adds, after having seen Gnüss' face.

Gnüss buckles his own pants, unhooks his harness, and begins the careful descent. "I don't think I make you feel like Zeus," he says a little sadly.

"Well, like Pan, anyway," Meinert [illegible] him.

That evening darkness falls on

as weekend hikers, and developed the southerner's endless capacity for arguing the merits of various mountain trails. By their third year in Friedrichshafen their motto was "A mountain each weekend." They spent nights in mountain huts, and in winters they might ski whole days without seeing other adventurers. If Meinert had asked his friend which experience had been the most ecstatic of *his* young life, Gnuss would have cited the week they spent alone in a hut over one Christmas holiday.

gensburg for years. Gnuss's most vivid memory of it, for reasons he can't locate, is of the scrape and desolation of his dentist's tooth-cleaning instruments one rainy March morning. Meinert usually refers to their hometown as Vitality's Graveyard. His younger brother still writes to him twice a week. Gnuss still sends a portion of his pay home to his parents and sisters.

young and foolish one but nevertheless can't resist comparing the invin-

Meinert to his pride at serving on

squers two oceans at once, the one above and the one below; this machine that brought their country supremacy in passenger, mail, and freight service to the North and South American continents only seventeen years after the Treaty of Versailles.

Even calm, cold, practical minds that worked on logarithms or carburetors felt the strange joy, the uncanny fascination, the radiance of atmospheric and gravitational freedom. They'd watched the *Graf Zeppelin*, their sister ship, take off one beautiful

duminum dope as if it were levitating on light, and it was like watching a juggernaut float free of the earth. One night they'd gone down almost to touch the waves and scared a fishing boat in the fog, and had joked afterward about what the boat's crew must have experienced: looking

to see a great dark, whirring, d ging thing rise like a monster them out of the murky air.

They're both Party members. were over Aachen during the na al referendum on the annexatio the Rhineland, and helped the C Steward rig up a polling booth o port promenade deck. The Yes had carried among the passen and crew by a cou

Meals in flight are so rel that some guests arrive for brea in their pajamas. Tereska is one guest, and Gnuss from his sta watches Meinert chatting and ing with her. *She's only an an ance*, he reminds himself, but brain seizes and charges aro enough to make him dizzy.

The great mass of the airs though patrolled by crew memb is off-limits to passengers excep those on guided tours. Soon after breakfast service is cleared, Mei informs him, with insufficient c trition, that Tereska's family ha quested him as their guide. An h later, when it's time for the tou begin, there's Tereska alone, in boyish shirt and sailor pants jokes with Meinert and lays a h on his forearm. He jokes with her

Gnuss, beside himself, contrive approach her parents, sunning th selves by a port observation wind He asks if they'd missed the tou transpires that the bitch has fo warned them that it would be a claustrophobic poking about.

only half-remembering his curr task. What's happened to his aut omy? What's happened to his abi to generate pleasure or contentm for himself independent of Meine behavior? Before all this he saw h self in the long term as First Offi or at least Chief Sailmaker: a solit and much-admired figure of c judgments and sober self-maste Instead, now he feels overheated coursed through with kinetici like an agitated and kenneled dog

He delivers the status report the ongoing inspection of the

ll. "Why are you reading?" Sautet, ; but Meinert asks

sponsibility has flown out the w. He takes to carrying Meinert's ar father's watch inside his pants. s briefs barely hold the weight. It s and sidles against his genitals. it show." Who cares?

sees Meinert only once all at on, and then from a distance. He ar ies for him as much as he dares g free moments. During lunch e Chief Steward slaps him on the of the head for gathering wool.

Three hours are spent in a solitary melancholy inspection of the most gas cell. In the end he say for sure what he's seen. It cell had disappeared entirely it's not clear he would have noticed.

Rhine salmon for the final din- Fresh trout from the Black For- There's an all-night party among passengers to celebrate their ar- in America. At the bar the man 'd thrown away his wristwatch departure amuses himself by bal- ng a fountain pen on its flat end. ey continue to be separated for t of the evening, which creeps gladually. Gnüss sorts glassware storage upon landing, and Mein- ends a hand back at the engine dolas, helping record fuel con- ption. Time seems out of joint, Gnüss finally figures out why: a kster has set the clock in the bar k, to extend the length of the bration.

On third watch he takes a break. goes below and stops by the crew's ters. No luck. He listens in on a fusion of suitable first names for dren conceived aloft in a zeppelin. consensus favors Shelium, if a girl. omeone asks if he's seen Meinert. tled, he eyes the questioner. Ap- ently the Captain's looking for . Two machinists exchange looks. Has Gnüss seen him or not? the stioner wants to know. He realizes hasn't answered. The whole room taken note of his paralysis. He he hasn't, and excuses himself.

He finds Meinert on the catwalk ding aft. Relief and anger and frus- ion swarm the cockleshell of his d. It feels like his frontal lobe is in tumult. Before he can speak Meinert tells him to keep his voice down, and that the party may be over. "What does *that* mean?" Gnüss wants to know. His friend doesn't answer.

They go hunting for privacy without success. A cross brace near the bottom of the tail supports a card game.

On the way forward again, they're confronted by their two roommates, Egk and Thoolen, who block the catwalk as though they've formed an alliance. Perhaps they feel neglected. "Do you two ever separate?" Egk asks. "Night and day I see you together." Thoolen nods unpleasantly. One is Hamburg at its most insolent, the other Bremerhaven at its foggiest.

"Shut up, you fat bellhop," Meinert says. They roughly squeeze past, and Egk and Thoolen watch them go.

"I'm so in love!" Egk sings out. Thoolen laughs.

Gnüss follows his friend in silence until they reach the ladder down to B deck. It's a busy hub. Crew members come and go briskly. Meinert hesitates. He seems absorbed in a recessed light fixture. It breaks Gnüss's heart to see that much sadness in the contours of his preoccupation.

"What do you mean the party may be over?" Gnüss demands quietly.

"Pruss wants to see me. He says for disciplinary matters. After that, you know as much as I," Meinert says.

The radio officer and the ship's doctor pass through the corridor at the bottom of the stairs, glancing up as they go, without stopping their quiet conversation.

When Gnüss is unable to respond, Meinert adds, "Maybe he just wants me to tidy up my uniform."

At a loss, Gnüss finally puts a hand on Meinert's arm. Meinert smiles, and whispers, "*You are the most important thing in the world to me.*"

The unexpectedness of it brings tears to Gnüss's eyes. Meinert murmurs that he needs to get into his dining-room whites. It's nearly time to serve the third breakfast. They've served two luncheons, two dinners, and now three breakfasts.

They descend the stairs together. Gnüss is already dressed and so gives his friend another squeeze on the arm and tells him not to worry, and then goes straight to the galley. His eyes

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In memory of those who died,

for those who are left to grieve and to try to understand.

A

It's time for them to take their landing stations.

Sutter passes them on their way to the catwalk and says that they [illegible] that he'd noticed a little bit of a hum.

[illegible] it's more than a little bit of a hum. Gruss volunteers to go, anxious to do something concrete for his disconsolate beloved. He wipes his [illegible] ert waits below on the catwalk.

Meinert's grandfather's pocket [illegible] testicles while he climbs. Once or [illegible] himself. The hum is up near the top, [illegible] perch, he stops and hooks on his [illegible] turns his head slightly to try and make his ears direction-finders. The [illegible] thumb and forefinger along nearby cables to test for vibration. The cables are covered in graphite to suppress sparks. The slickness seems sexual to him. He's dismayed by his single-mindedness.

On impulse, he takes the watch, pleasingly warm, from his pants. He loops it around one of the cable bolts just so he can look at it. The short chain keeps slipping from the weight. He wraps it once around the nut on [illegible] feels loose to him. He removes and pockets the watch, finds the adjustable spanner on his tool belt, fits it snugly over the nut, and tightens it, and then, uncertain, tightens it again. There's a short, high-pitched sound

suffused with what he understar [illegible] be an unprecedented feeling fe [illegible] to himself, *Imagine instead tha [illegible] were perfectly happy*. Shivering, [illegible] his coat collar turned up as th [illegible] aerodrome, he leans against a c [illegible] of wires and stays and re-experie [illegible] ness, the hull starlit at altitude, [illegible] trical storms and the incandesc [illegible] of clouds, and Gruss's lips or [illegible] throat. He remembers his you [illegible] brother's iridescent fingers after [illegible] ing blown soap bubbles as a child.

Below the ship, frightened h [illegible] spook like flying fish discharged [illegible] seas of yellow grass. Miles a [illegible] necklaces of lightning drop and f [illegible]

Inside the hangarlike hull, [illegible] can feel the gravitational force [illegible] Captain Pruss brings the ship u [illegible] the docking mast in a tight turn. [illegible] stresses on the [illegible] after-hull structure, and the bra [illegible] wire bolt that Gruss overtighte [illegible] snaps like a rifle shot. The reco [illegible] wire slashes open the gas cell o [illegible] site. Seven or eight feet ab [illegible] Gruss's alarmed head, the escap [illegible] hydrogen encounters the prevai [illegible] St. Elmo's fire playing atop the sh [illegible]

From the ground, in Lakehu [illegible] New Jersey, the [illegible] lingers in a last wide circle, uneas [illegible] the uneasy air.

The fireball explodes outward [illegible] upward, annihilating Gruss at [illegible] center. More than a hundred feet [illegible] low on the axial catwalk, as [illegible] blinding light envelops everyth [illegible] Meinert knows that w [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

THE FREQUENCY

Solving the riddle of the Dan Rather beating

By Paul Limbert Allman



Dan Rather is the
ax of our time, and his
e is "Kenneth, what is
frequency?"
ho can forget our col-
ve shock and bewilder-
when we opened the
York Times and learned
event? October 1986
ol evening, upper Park
ue, in the Eighties. News-
and reservoir of trust
Rather, dressed casually,
s home from dinner at a
d's house.
wo well-dressed white men
eir thirties—one six feet
with dark hair and a mus-
—accost Rather, one of
demanding to know,
nneth, what is the
ency?"
'ou have the wrong guy,"
er replies.
ne of the men responds
a punch to the newsman's
under his left ear. Rather
into the lobby of a building on Park
ue, and the thugs pursue him, punch-
kicking, badgering Rather repeated-
th the strange query: "Kenneth, what
frequency?"
doorman rings for the super, the su-
nurses upon the scene of the cruel in-
gation, and the attackers flee. Mr
ner is briefly hospitalized. The at-
ers are not caught. Their motives are
nown. It is presumed a case of mis-
identity.
Ir. Rather returned to his news
broadcast, unbowed, and made a statement about the incident. Who did it, and why? "Why and exactly by whom remains unclear," Mr. Rather announced to a television audience estimated to be 18 million households. "And it may never be determined."

Dan Rather looks anxious on television. He needs the answer. The incident haunts him, and it shows. "For a while," he said, "I made it a point to hang out on the street corner opposite from where it happened and observe things." During these poignant forays, he disguised himself with sunglasses and a baseball cap.

I want Dan Rather to be free. I want my generation to be free, not trapped by conspiracy theories, like those who wrestle with the bloody puzzle of Dallas 1963. Our generation must have an answer to our riddle. And we will all know we have it when Dan Rather comes on the television and no longer looks anxious.

One day, Rather signed off a broadcast with the single word, "Courage." A noble gesture, at once commanding and empathetic. But it had no more effect than if he had said, "Porridge." Such is the great ineffable quality of Dan Rather.

Yes, there are those who would like to keep him anxious. The same people who jumped and pummeled him on Park Avenue, calling him "Kenneth," demanding the frequency.

Bastards.

I ask you: if the victim had been somebody named Kenneth, what would *he* have made of "what is the frequency?" Was this some intimate reference known only to Kenneth and his attackers? If so, how could the attackers—who knew their victim well enough to communicate with coded language—then stalk and attack the wrong man, especially when the "wrong man" was nationally famous?

They knew their victim. Rather's face was broadcast to millions of Amer

Limbert Allman's novels are Otis (St
in's Press) *and the forthcoming* The Man
o Sold His Shadow.

I

W

object of envy and speculation on
out of his peers."

ried to imagine an imbroglio be-
n these two men, both titans in
field: the burly, bristling, bril-
professor/writer and the eager,
itious, glamorous, comparatively
rebral news anchor. Titans who
large footprints in Texas soil but no
y of mutual distemper, no trace of
dge. The implication—that a bril-
writer would somehow get him-
involved in a hugger-mugger ret-
tionary ambush of a prominent
s editor over an undisclosed dis-
was difficult to accept. Yet these
nts were undoubtedly linked to-
ner by that strangely magical re-
Kenneth, what is the frequen-
and by their oddly parallel lives.
n 1959, Rather became a TV re-
er for KTRK in Houston; two years
r, Barthelme became director of
Contemporary Arts Museum in
ston. Rather eventually transferred
New York City for CBS News, and
thelme also landed in the city,
ching at City College.

will never know what wrong Don-
Barthelme perceived was done to
by Dan Rather during their mutual
ubations in Houston. No one will
r know. It will have to be the one
known that haunts our generation
we ponder the Rather Barthelme
nnection with the incident on Park
enue. But there are at least two
ll-dressed white men out there (now
their fifties) who know the com-
te truth. Did Barthelme know what
y were doing? Or were the avengers
ing on their own, loose cannons
armed with quotes from
Barthelme's canon?

n Barthelme's "The Emerald," a
porter named Lily is interviewing a
tch about her magic potions, and
y wants to know if she can get one
, for her "problem."

I have a problem.
What's the problem?
The editor, Crackbrain Lingo—is he'
called around the shop.
What about him?
He takes my stuff and throws it on the
floor. When he doesn't like it.
On the floor?
I know it's nothing to cry about, but it
me. I cry. I know I shouldn't cry but I
cry. When I do it's hard to do it. I
Pages and pages of it, so carefully typed,
Do I sound like I have a problem?
Yes. But he is not pertinent.
That's this man Lather, right?
Mr. Lather. Editor-in-chief.

On the following page, Mr. Lather himself telephones Mad Molly:

Hello is this Mad Molly?
Yes, who's this?
My name is Lather.
The editor?
Editor-king, actually.
Yes Mr. Lather what is the nature of
your publication, don't know what I'd
ever
Worse. I print together. When We
are virtuous and beautiful, it becomes
my mission and beautiful. When We
read our hours it becomes dumb and
dreary. When *World* is not thy
friend it becomes *I* am not thy friend.
And if I am not thy friend, Lady,
I eat thee alive.

All hell breaks loose in the story: a foot kills a man, an emerald begins to speak, and devils appear . . .

Three devils! How big? Ten inches
we are the meek but now
A free press is not afraid of a thousand
devils!
There are only three!
What if it's closer to
Like Lather, the editor!

Just as I was prepared to dismiss the coincidence of finding "Kenneth" and "What is the frequency?" fifty pages apart in the same book, written by a Houstonian whose career mirrored Rather's, and who was reporting in the same town at the same time as Rather, I discover this rather ham-fisted swipe at an imperious news editor with a name so close to Rather's own that it seems almost unfair. An agitated, anxious, irritated man is said to be a mere lather. There is something slightly foolish implied by that kind of lather, in a foamy, worked-up way. Donald Barthelme's editor-king, Lather, is a newsman in a lather, greatly agitated, foolishly grand. One begins to wonder how long Dan Rather has been wearing that anxious look on his face.

One cannot address the issue of the Rather Beating without addressing the perplexing strangeness of the popular incitement and, in the context of

crime on a confessed liar; later
Rather
William Tager, who fatally shot Nic
technician
gomery on August 31, 1994. The sup-
posed scoop was written not by an in-
vestigative reporter but by a TV critic.

The tenuous connection was first made by Dr. Park Dietz, forensic psychiatrist who interviewed Tager to see whether he was fit for trial. According to the *Dallas Morning News*, Dietz said there was "no question that [ex-
William Tager who assaulted Dan Rather. The defense of coerced confession is exactly what I expect to find when the people were involved in the same in-
cident and they're all telling the truth."

If both parties are indeed telling the truth, then someone has some explaining to do, and the *Houston Press* article. The published report of "two well-dressed men" who accosted Rather, "one of them demanding to know . . . [exactly, what is the fre-
quency?" becomes, in the revised version, "An agitated man [who] direct-
ed a stream of near-gibberish at him, including the question, 'What's the frequency?' and a word that Rather told police sounded like the name 'Kenneth.'"

The merging of two carefully iden-
tified
Rather repeatedly with the strange query, "Kenneth, what is the frequency?" into one
[illegible] washroom during his word is
explained away by the *Dallas Morning News*: "Some news accounts at the time re-
ported the two attacks, but Rather said he had told police it was just his im-
pression that the attacks were connect-
ed. He said another man only report-
edly attacked him."

Here are the rather curious fingerprints of a cover-up, and one wonders why.

The rather [illegible] ravings of a criminal who is described by his friends as "loony toons," and by his psychiatrist as mentally incompetent, is highly questionable. Likewise, the willingness to accept [illegible] without question provided [illegible] more than [illegible]

is stopped by the doorman

came to Rather's rescue. Are

Donald Barthelme, one of my literary heroes. Thomas Pynchon—no stranger to Houston, I might add—de-

, tersely as "[a] [illegible] encounter." Dan [illegible], one of my heroes, is a victim. He was minding his own business, set upon and pummeled, and sent [illegible], which isn't fun and isn't funny. As a victim, Rather will [illegible] of that [illegible] his day. I hope that the revelations contained here will help him deal with the calamity.

Rather's eagerness to put the issue to rest is understandable. The event, fueled by rumor and gossip, has dogged him. The rock band R.E.M. turned [illegible] into a song, "What's the Frequency, Kenneth?" Rather's curious misfortune has clearly entered the public consciousness and become a touchstone for a gener- [illegible] like it to go away, and there are undoubtedly many [illegible] Mr. Rather in this effort.

[illegible] Dan Rather from the prison of his own perplexity. The bogus attempt to close [illegible] Mr. Rather, for he knows better. If they had told him the Huntsman from Snow White had confessed, Dan Rather would have agreed, just to get it behind him.

Rather does not know who did this to him, or why. "Why and exactly by whom remains unclear," he stated on [illegible] the master's be- [illegible]

[illegible] Unfortunately, [illegible] result [illegible] Maybe you feel the yoke of mystery lift from your shoulders.

But there are forces that do not want my revelation to be known. Dan Rather—who once, by his own admission, "made it a point to hang out on the street corner opposite from where it happened and observe things," now sits tight behind an impenetrable fortress, protected by gatekeepers. Word filters down from his aerie that he doesn't want to know. He is selling a book now; his face remains strangely tense. He weeps on TV and has expressed a wish to enlist in the military. I wish I could save him.

Rather is like Rapunzel, locked in a tower, peering out from his window, giving the evening news. Dan Rather, Dan Rather, let down your hair! But no, he's cut it short. He doesn't want to be saved.

Barthelme's brother Frederick has refused to comment. Perhaps he knows nothing, but one wonders. There are two younger Barthelme brothers, including Frederick. Maybe they know something about the two attackers. Maybe they know why brother Donald had it in for the Texas newsman.

The building super who came to Rather's aid and frightened off the attackers, Robert Sestak, has passed away. I spoke with his family, and they graciously recounted his remarkable tale of two well-dressed men and Dan Rather in a Park Avenue vestibule. It is those two men who know the truth. But they have disappeared, as if they had stepped out from the pages of a book and ducked back inside as the covers slammed shut.

Donald Barthelme liked to compare his work to a collage. "The point of collage," he said, "is that unlike things are stuck together to make, in the best case, a new reality." He was king of the irrational, the surprising juxtaposition. Dan Rather is king of [illegible] reports. Why did the irrational attack the rational? Is it always the way with these two? Rather's very name is contained within the name Barthelme. Barthelme's [illegible] about King Arthur. Rathur? Lather? Editor-k Who can say?

There is Dan Rather, up in his t er, a prisoner of perplexity. He doe want to be saved, and yet, and yet he gazes out, and the look on his speaks volumes. His lips move and hear the news, but if you read his you might see the words of Sr White, from Barthelme's novel of same name, as she gazes out from own tower:

> There is something wrong with those people standing there, g gawking. And with all those who not come and at least *try* to climb up till the role. And with the very worl self, for not being able to supply a pri For not being able to at least be civil enough to supply the correct endin the story.

December Index Sources

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NEW BOOKS

Guy Davenport



When Gerald Posner was at work on *Hitler's Children* (1991), he interviewed [illegible] Göring, daughter of the infamous [illegible] of the Luftwaffe. "I can understand that Jewish writers would write [illegible] things about my father," she told [illegible], adding, "I actually expect that [illegible]st everybody has a favorable opinion of my father, except maybe in [illegible]erica." Gitta Sereny's [illegible] (W. W. Norton, [illegible].95) is a discursive autobiography in which she is present as a witness and interrogator of Nazi brutality and modern German memory of it: a flawed memory warped by ignorance, rationalization, and guilt. At age eleven Sereny saw, in Nuremberg (she was passing through on her way from her native Austria to school in England), the 1934 Nazi Party Congress rally that Leni Riefenstahl filmed as *Triumph of the Will*—an operatic display of ranked battalions, swastika standards, flags, searchlights making a "cathedral of light," lugubrious military music, and Hitler screaming like a demented rooster. Years later, in *Albert Speer: His Battle with Truth*, she would unmask the lies and evasions of the man who had designed this spectacle.



Getting things straight is the genius of this book. It looks at the ongoing trials of old men who in their Nazi youth killed children with a hammer and are only now, over half a century later, facing in court witnesses who saw them do it. Sereny was deeply involved (as reporter and investigator) in the prosecution of John Demjanjuk, "Ivan the Terrible," the ambiguity of whose trials—and apparent innocence—have led her to believe that further attempts to punish the sadistic monsters of the concentration camps keep open a wound rather than healing it.

She sorts out the dread camps as to kind and purpose. Only four existed specifically for extermination: Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. These the conquering armies never saw; the Germans themselves bulldozed them and disguised the terrain as farms. The camps that horrified the world in newsreels and Margaret Bourke-White's photographs in *Life*, notably Buchenwald and Belsen, were pigsty-filthy prisons for slave laborers—Jews, Gypsies, political dissidents, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, artists, scientists, poets, children of dubious genetic design, and other "animal human beings."

It is this confusion about holding camps and extermination camps that gives Holocaust deniers (all of whom, Sereny thinks, have a political agenda behind their bogus research) a handle for wrenching evidence into convincing the gullible. She is also critical of the Holocaust's having become in the popular mind a pogrom exclusively of Jews. The Nazis kept meticulous records. Lithuania was the first country to be *judenfrei* (completely rid of Jews), but in the Kommando operation (carried out by the S.S. with the help of the Lithuanian police) that accomplished this slaughter 1,851 "others"—Communists, the mentally ill, Gypsies, and Russian P.O.W.s—were murdered, in addition to the 137,422 Jews killed between July and October 1941, of whom 34,464 were children. The S.S. was so proud of all this that they made a training film of it.

There is much more in this book: the kinfolk of Bormann, Heydrich, and other Nazi bigwigs and how they've coped, the ancient and vain Leni Riefenstahl, and the last living person to have known Hitler (one of his adoring secretarial staff). Gitta Sereny is an impressive field historian, if there's such a category. She was *there*; she has seen monsters close-up; she has sifted the evidence with clarity and superbly intelligent insight.

While Sereny was a nurse and Résistance operative in occupied France, the eight-year-old Oliver Wolf Sacks, who grew up to be the distinguished neurologist and diagnostician who writes best-selling medical studies with beguiling titles (*The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat, An Anthropologist on Mars*), was learning about violent cruelty at Braefield School in the English Midlands. He was an evacuee there, from the Blitz in London. His bad luck was to fall into the hands of a headmaster who taught with the birch on bare bottoms and bullied his students in the manner we know from many memoirs of British school [illegible].

Sacks was the son of two well-to-do Jewish doctors, and the [illegible] nephew of a round of chemical and industrial uncles, from whom "Uncle Tungsten," engineer of the incandescent lightbulb by which [illegible] ably reading this, was chosen as the title of this memoir. [illegible] little Oliver grew [illegible]

congenital and human a primer as you might include Chapter 16, "Mendeleev's Garden," a prose poem to the ads, its complementarities and elective and as mystical as Swedenborg.

Sacks has recently been engaged with the etiology of some of the more mysterious diseases: postencephalitic Parkinson's and color blindness in island populations. He is a member of the American Fern Society. What further sets him apart from the general run of scientists, overworked doctors, swimmers, and fern collectors is that all evidence in his books shows that he is an extraordinarily happy man, as happy as the ten-year-old who repeatedly stank up the large family home in Lon-

Another man with steady nerves and adolescent mulishness was the ex- ley Powell (1834–1902). The science

(Harper- and a successful adventure yarn. Major Powell's own account was published he edited for the government, hefty large volumes illustrated with masterfully executed wood engravings and

boats loaded with food and scientific bounced down the Colorado four times, describes the difficulties peculiar to each white-water shoal. Powell kept a diary, as did others in his band (vari- spelling). There's a new kind of crisis daily, at least three James Bond–thrillers' worth of hairbreadth escapes and awful tests of courage and physical endurance. Rumors of their deaths spread from newspaper to newspaper. But they survived the thousand miles of turbulent river, near starvation, and exposure. One day before they reached the end of the canyon, three deser thinking that a rapids they could ahead was certain death. These th climbed the walls of the canyon were never seen again. The survi came out into the flat country at mouth of the Virgin River, ninety-r days after they had set out. They w met by Mormon scouts sent by Brig Young. The scouts' mission had bee find out when and how they had p ished. Their first meal after week living on dried apples and coffee wa fish and squash, which they ate "so many hogs." Next day, they a wagonload of watermelons.

REMEMBERING IRIS

A new biography gets it half right

By Jay Parini

Iris Murdoch: A Life, by Peter J. Conradi. W. W. Norton, 2001. 597 pages. $3

Only a couple of years before Alzheimer's enveloped Iris Murdoch in a cloud of unknowing, I took her to a play in London's West End. As the lights came up, I turned and saw that her face was wet with tears and, putting a hand on her wrist, asked if she was all right. She looked at me with steady eyes. "If the play is any good," she said, "one is never all right afterwards."

The same could be said about books, of course. And after reading the best of Murdoch's novels—*The Bell* (1958), *A Severed Head* (1961), *A Fairly Honorable Defeat* (1970), and *The Sea, The Sea* (1978)—one is certainly far from all right. I came away from them with my sense of the world somehow shifted, with a feeling that life was more complex and, ultimately, more beautiful than I had suspected. Her central position among British novelists of the po war era is well earned.

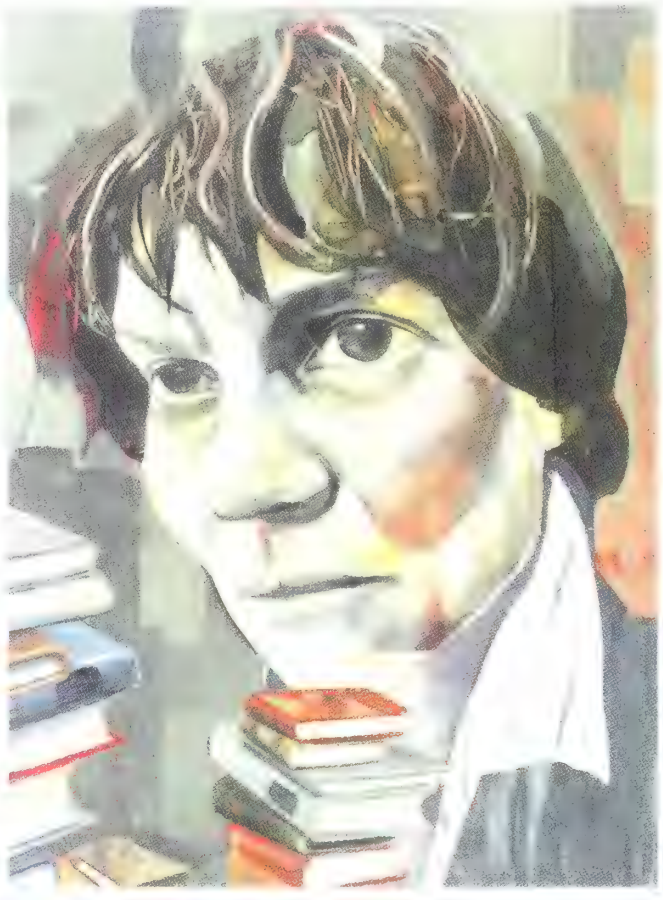
Some years ago, Murdoch and h husband, John Bayley, were neig bors of mine in Oxford, and we s each other fairly often. Throughc the period when Alzheimer's ma conversation with her a painful exp rience, I visited her periodically. was painful to recall the Iris of ol deeply learned but never pretentiou always curious about other peop and their lives, generous to a fau She would arrive at our door eager see my children, quizzing them abo their studies, asking questions abo their rugby exploits or school trip With the untroubled face of a nu she gazed in admiration at her hu band, a brilliant critic, as he talke about novels or poems. Except on th subject of Irish politics (she was cat gorically opposed to IRA violence she rarely showed any sense of irrit tion or anger. About her own wor she was unfailingly modest. "I ma write another book," she said to m after finishing *Jackson's Dilemm*

Jay Parini teaches at Middlebury College. His

96), her twenty-sixth novel, "but
not I'm not so sure it matters."
Cr had the feeling that, toward
e nd, her novel-writing was on
to atic pilot. Yet she had done re-
ar bly fine work until late in life.
ture fiercely intellectual, right
philosopher by training, she had
ib hed important books on Sartre
id Plato, on moral philosophy and
h . Her own literary es-
v were substantial and
ng. She wrote several
a and some surprisingly
poetry. But the nov-
s, beginning with *Under*
e et in 1954, remained
poets, and her immense
activity had in itself
ne a subject of wor-
r As Martin Amis wrote
983, "Iris Murdoch's
on is habit-forming,
h is just as well, since
ervice now outbulks
of Tolstoy or George
You can see the Mur-
-addicts, with their
rged, telltale irises,
ng like ghosts in the
libraries and book-
s. Another novel will,
time, ease their crav-

espite (or because of)
large following, critics
found things to dis-
k about Murdoch's tic
. Harold Bloom, in a
uliar response, dispar-
d her doggedly conven-
al style, her lack of
cal experimentation,
her overt philosophizing, though
cknowledged that no other con-
porary British novelist equaled
eminence. John Updike, who re-
ved many of her novels with en-
asm, nevertheless grumbled that
ss Murdoch's own energy, as
r, verges on the exhausting."
n A. S. Byatt, a deep admirer,
d her symbolism heavy-handed
times.

Murdoch's work was, in truth, un-
n, though she presented a con-
tly moving target. Without call-
attention to the fact, she
mpted a huge variety of novelis-
strategies in different periods in
her life, unobtrusively experimenting as bravely as any avant-garde novelist yet always keeping in mind her audience. Her influences were varied, often contradictory. The crisp, wild comedy of her earliest novels gestures toward the tradition of British satirical fiction while gazing longingly across the English Channel toward French existentialism.



She looks to primitive fertility myths for inspiration in *A Severed Head* and to Freud in *The Unicorn* (1963). Deeply under the spell of Shakespeare during the sixties, her work of that period veers toward romance, employing intricate double plots. As her interest in the novel as fable grows, her later fiction retreats from strict realism, at times verging on the fantastic. A novel like *The Black Prince* (1973), with its psychic terror and baroque narrative strategies, owes something to Nabokov, drawing attention to itself as a work of fiction. Any number of powerful influences on her work, from Jane Austen to Proust and Dostoevsky, have been cited, although all these [illegible] sorbed.

The writer Iris Murd[illegible] subject [illegible] would interest a [illegible] biographer. (A. N. Wilson, who had once planned to write about her, eventually shied away.) The sheer bulk and variety of her work, with its steep intellectual and emotional terrain, seems daunting. As for the life, the last four decades or so passed quietly in Oxfordshire, with Murdoch bent over a desk, scribbling. She avoided public occasions, preferring the company of friends, and guarded her privacy with some ferocity. Her intellectual and emotional life were vivid, even tumultuous, but invisible to the outside world. (At her house for drinks one evening, I thought she seemed distracted, and asked about her day. She said, "I was reading Henry James all afternoon. Thrilling, but it rather tore me apart, too.") When I heard that Peter J. Conradi—her friend of some years—was writing the official biography, I did not envy him.

Not surprisingly, the first half of *Iris Murdoch: A Life* is vastly superior to the second, giving the impression (a mistaken one) that Murdoch lived her life for thirty-five years, then sat down to write about it. Conradi might well have stopped his narrative with the publication of *Under the Net*, her first novel, since after that point the story of her life (as he sees it) quickly became the stories she imagined. It is obvious that the biographer did not know what to do with the novelist's middle to later years, and he loses the thread at every turn, meandering into backwaters of plot summary and critical exegesis. Since the marriage and final years have been so brilliantly evoked by her husband, in not one but *three* recent memoirs (*Elegy for Iris*, *Iris and Her Friends*, and

...ITCHHIKING

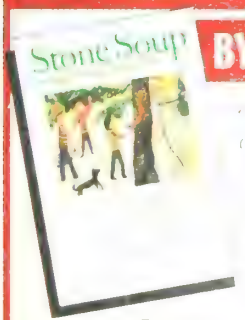
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...poles, phrases

...s the point of the book. As it is hinted in the title, the fascinating parts...are the stories...of ordinary people's dreams, flaws, ideas, insanity, generosity and cruelty, extremes of the human condition, told in a very simple way. ... [B]ad jobs, good jobs, growing relationships...the freedom to travel and the slavery to wage jobs, and...how the poor are undermined and dehumanized by the rich and each other...[F]ascinating portrait of America, at once beautiful and horrible, awkward and elegant, but extremely rewarding."

-Reviewer: Ken Miller, *Philadelphia*

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Widower's House), there was perhaps ...

Conradi certainly provides the ... background ever undertaken. Although she spent little time in Ireland, the country of her birth, her family on both ... were Irish Protestants, and her parents—Hughes and Rene—never felt at home in England, where they nevertheless spent much of their lives and raised their only child. Not surprisingly, Murdoch's fiction is mostly set in suburban, middle-class London—a world she knew well. "Murdochland," as it were, might be defined as the inner southwestern parts of that city, including Hammersmith, Chelsea, Kensington, and Notting Hill. Only in *The Red and the Green* (1965), a fairly bad historical novel about the 1916 Easter uprising, does she deal specifically with an Irish theme, though two other novels—*The Unicorn* and *The Sea, The Sea*—are set in that country, rather superficially.

Murdoch's earliest memories, Conradi notes, were "of swimming, singing and being sung to, of animals, and of wonderment at the workings of the adult world." Swimming, indeed, became almost a family religion, and remained so until the end. (Her husband told me that not a year or two before she died he and Iris had plunged into the Cherwell, the murky river that flows through Oxford. "We just took off our clothes," he said, "and splashed about in the mud. It was very jolly.") A happy, precocious girl, Murdoch bathed in the attention of her parents and teachers. She was the plump little girl who invariably raised her hand with the right answer. Winning a scholarship to Badminton, a respectable prep school near Bath, she proved herself early, eventually becoming head girl. Like many intellectuals during the thirties, she was deeply attracted to communism and pacifism—... contradictory impulses. "Looking back," she later remembered, "... the thirties as a time ... dangerously unrealistic political ..." Conradi adds, astutely:

> ... [M]uch of [Murdoch's] fiction and ... moral philosophy ... attacks upon the ... egotism of fact ... thought that ... setting people free was ... the ... realism of which we in ... idea) would bring freedom and ju... all countries, and the world wo... better."

The change from school to u... sity was, as Murdoch recalled, ... lent and positively intoxicating ... riving at Somerville College, O... in 1938, she threw herself with ... don into her new life, making fr... that would last a lifetime. She ... planned to study English literatu... switched to Classics—"Mods ... Greats," in Oxford lingo—when ... came under the influence of Ed... Fraenkel, a world-renowned clas... who had been driven from Germa... the Nazis. This was the first of ... cession of powerful older men, s... al of them Jewish refugees, who ... her in thrall. Although fiercel... tached to his wife (he committe... cide soon after she died), Frae... loved to flirt with young women ... he found Murdoch (with her int... respectful gaze) an agreeable ta... She worshiped him, and they rem... close. Later in life, she rememb... his class on Aeschylus' *Agamem...* which gave her "a vision of excelle... that would never dissolve: "The t... of the Merton clock striking the q... ters still brings back to me the tens... mosphere of that class—and how a... I felt in case I was asked somethi... didn't know."

Another charismatic teacher, I... ald MacKinnon, steered her tow... moral philosophy—an area of st... that would fascinate her to the ... and to which she made significant ... tributions with two landmark stu... *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970, and ... cently brought back into print by R... ledge as part of its admirable Clas... series) and *Metaphysics as a Guid... Morals* (1992). "I have this incred... fine guy MacKinnon as a tutor," ... wrote excitedly to a friend, "wh... makes things lucky. It's good to m... someone so extravagantly unselfish ... fantastically noble, as well as so ... tremely intelligent as this cove. He ... spires a pure devotion. One feels vag... ly one would go through fire for h... & so on." The intense relationship ... tween master and pupil would becor... in her fiction, a constant, though ma... of her fictive masters seem demoni...

nradi summons a nostalgic vi- of Murdoch's Oxford in those ght years before the outbreak of Indeed, the atmosphere of im- ing doom lends a special inten- o this period in Murdoch's life, e plunges from one emotional nglement to another. Inevitably, would lose close friends in the to come, among them Frank npson, a fellow student whom learly loved and whose heroic n in the war is recounted by Con- with particular feeling.

fter graduating with a first-class se, Murdoch took a dreary job at reasury in wartime London. Like any of her countrymen, she en- d terror and privation with stoic chment. Soon tired of the Trea- she joined the United Nations ef and Rehabilitation Adminis- on (UNRRA) and was posted to ium and Austria, where she came -to face with the ruins of war w *irrevocably* broken so many lives been in this war," she wrote to friend. Not surprisingly, refugees— the condition of spiritual dis- ement—would preoccupy Mur- n in her life and fiction.

n Belgium she met Sartre, whom vividly described for a friend back ngland:

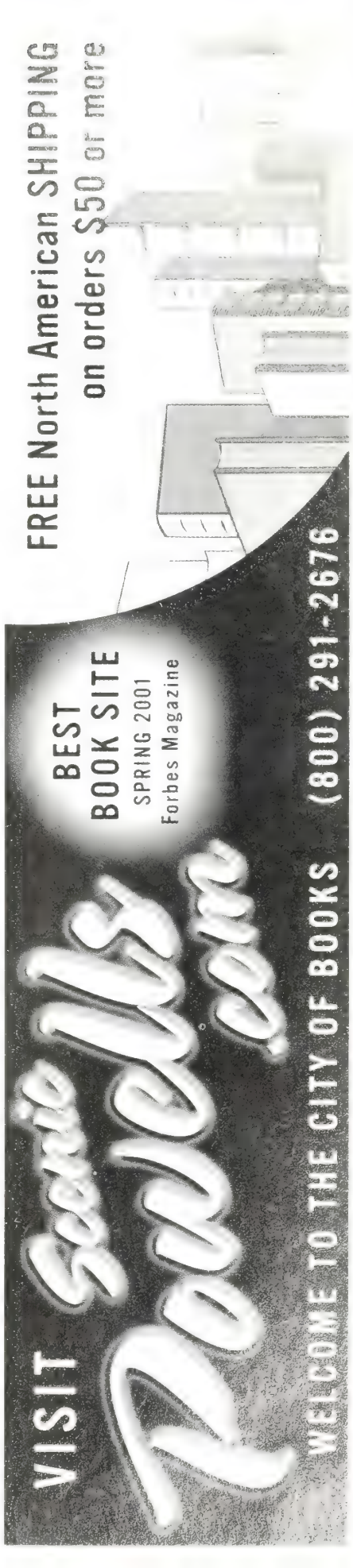
is talk is ruthlessly gorgeously lucid— . I begin to like his ideas more & more e's accused by many of being a cor- pter of the youth . . . he's certainly ex- ssively obsessed, in his novels, with the nore horrid aspects of sex. But his writ- g and talking on morals—will, liber- , choice—is hard & lucid & invigo- ting. It's the real thing—so exciting, so sobering, to meet at last—after rning away in despair from the shallow upid milk & water "ethics" of English noralists."

t impressed her that Sartre wrote ilosophy, novels, plays, cinema, rnalism!" Indeed, he became a sort model for her as a trained philoso- r willing to venture into other ds. (Her book on Sartre is still one he best on the subject in English.) hen she returned to England after war, she pursued graduate studies philosophy at Cambridge, where ttgenstein was the dominant fig- . Him she regarded with "awe and m," though he was at the end of his academic career and they had only a few encounters. Murdoch was much more interested in existential philosophy, in ethics and aesthetics, than the kind of hard-nosed linguistic philosophy dominating Oxbridge at the time. Wittgenstein's astringent style and consuming interest in epistemology struck her as remote from her own concerns. "For me," she wrote in her journals, "philosophical problems are the problems of my own life."

She returned to Oxford in 1948, taking up a teaching job in philosophy at St. Anne's College. Apart from an interlude of lecturing at the Royal College of Art, in London, Oxford would remain her home, though she abandoned her teaching position in 1963 to focus on her writing. Nevertheless, she continued to think of herself as a philosopher, and her massive study, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, gathers a lifetime of philosophical reflection. In that wide-ranging, clotted, inspired work, she defines the problem of the novelist as "precisely a unification of fact and value, the exhibiting of personal morality in a non-abstract manner as the stuff of consciousness." It was a point she had made earlier, in the essay "The Sublime and the Good," wherein she argued that "What stuns us into a realisation of our destiny is not, as Kant imagined, the formlessness of nature but rather its unutterable particularity; and most particular and individual of all natural things is the mind of man."

Given this understanding of the relationship between philosophy and art, it makes sense that Murdoch decided upon a career in fiction, where she could revel in the particularity of the human world, giving concrete embodiment to a variety of abstract ideas, watching them play out on the field of action. It follows that she was drawn to "the now so unfashionable naturalistic idea of character," and that novels would celebrate the rich, even bizarre, variety of human types, turning each many-faceted character in the bright light of her fictional beam like a beautifully cut diamond.

N., the anonymous narrator of *The Philosopher's Pupil* (1983), is aware that a novelist takes certain liberties, invading private spaces, speculating on motives. He writes: "As I now end this



ter, I observe, to

I Arnaldo Momigliano, the historian, the refugee ed author, about whom she wrote:

> the main thoroughfares, which roads lead to the river. Later I shall explore each quarter carefully.

not physical, as Murdoch's journals

> savagely leaves back my head. There is

A Bulgarian Jew, Canetti settled in barely escaped the Nazis. He rose to

was safety in that. Yet Canetti was

she met John Bayley, a much younger demanding. "O the calming external- ter the upsetting unwanted these continental," she journals. Bayley appealed to her naturalness: "I have nev such an undefended mortal." Elsewhere she wrote, "His voice was How can I describe how re makes me be." A sense of soul humility, simplicity, and a way of being very acute & subtle without ever pro- tecting one self by placing & despising other people." For his part, he was mesmerized by her attention, telling her: "I feel like a dog overwhelmed by being given an enormous bone."

Having lived a turbulent existence through the war years and its after- math, Murdoch felt a deep need to settle into a calming routine. John Bayley seemed the ideal companion for her, and they married hastily in 1956, surprising many in Murdoch's circle. Conradi notes: "Iris did not want a bourgeois or conventional marriage. This arrangement procured her a child-wife in John, who cooked, or assembled, picnic meals." This "child-wife" of a husband (one wonders if the put-down of this de- scription is necessary, when "sensi- tive caretaker" would have sufficed) looked after her assiduously. She was to sit, for the next four decades, in her study, writing novels and philosophy. Childless, absorbed in their work and each oth- er, they lived for many years outside of Oxford, deep in the country, at Cedar Lodge, a tumbledown house with large rooms and an overgrown garden. Later in life they moved back into town, occupying a large suburban house in North Oxford that was equally tumbledown.

"We're not much for housekeep- ing," Bayley said, apologetically, when I visited them for the first time. Old newspapers and literary reviews were stacked everywhere, and books in tall piles lined the hallways and towered, like mini skyscrapers, in the living room and kitchen. Wherever one rest- ed one's elbow, it seemed to stick. Dinner was usually a makeshift a packaged pork pie unwrapped placed, innocently, on a plate be bit of salad. Picnic food. But the versation was so good—warm, allusive—that one never minde lack of *haute cuisine*.

Conradi avoids close psycholo scrutiny of the Murdoch-Bayley riage, and he does not really an certain questions about Murd herself, some of them obvious example, what lay behind her o son with older, charismatic Did it have anything to do with own father? Where did the n come from? How did she manag write so much, so well, so quic Did she revise? What were her ing habits? He passes lightly over bisexuality and refuses to reach clean biographical hands down the dirty engines of her art. Murd seems, after reading this biogra even more mysterious.

On the other hand, Conradi derstands and is able to articulate her fiction matters:

> Iris studied love and power and w well on both. She had impor things to say about desire in hu life and its relationship with good She explored the rivalry betw men, and the Oedipal conflict tween strong-willed mothers and Nietzschean offspring. She could ture those moments of startled vi which we see our world without conception, could describe the mary and make it magical. Above she kept the traditional novel al and in so doing, changed what it is pable of. She made out of a mixtur love-romance and spiritual advent story a vehicle capable of commen on modern society.

One question seems to have sessed Murdoch to the end: Wha the good life? In *Metaphysics as a Gu to Morals*, she famously writes: "Go represents the reality of which Goo the dream." In a vast shelf of nove she explores in concrete terms the p rameters of the good life, summoni a wide range of vivid characters a situations. As Peter Conradi's bo suggests, she herself appears to ha lived a good life—an achieveme perhaps more admirable than the no ls themselves.

NATOMY LESSONS

n S. Connell and the documentary school

Donovan Hohn

sed in this essay:

Aztec Treasure House: New and Selected Essays, by Evan S. Connell. Counterpoint, 2001. 470 pages. $28.

There is a scene early in *Mrs. Bridge* (1959), Evan S. Connell's first and probably best novel, in which young Douglidge builds in the vacant side his family's house a olith out of cement and —"jugs and stones, tin cans, imbs, broken bottles, and te other trash he could find My!'" says Mrs. Bridge uparning of the project. "'I ee you're going to be an ar- ct or an engineer when you up.'" But her son, Connell's y disguised proxy, intends thing at once less useful and sublime: a towering monat that Mrs. Bridge finds far 'eccentric and mystifying.'" day while Douglas is at ol she asks the fire departto demolish it. "'It was just ng too big,'" she explains to that night. "'People were ning to wonder.'"

onnell has spent his career ng people wonder. Every of his twenty-one books is a st against that smallness of l, that timorous parochialof the spirit, in which the Bridges of the world seek e and shelter. One mornwhile dusting the bookcase, Bridge happens upon a volume of rad inherited from her husband's e and, reading it, fleetingly underls that she has been "skimming the years of existence . . . ignorant of life to the last, without ever having been made to see all it may contain. . . ." Connell's ambition has been to escape precisely that ignorance: to reckon human existence; to see for himself, and to make us see, what life may contain. This sensual yearning for knowledge, this insatiable wanderlust—what Anatole France called "a long desire"—is Connell's constant subject and his greatest theme.



"Certain people do not travel the way most of us travel," he writes in dangerous and unusual trips for incomprehensible reasons." The description could [illegible] Connell's career [illegible] more than half a century, to the essays and novels, his books include four collections of short stories, two notebooks of poetical aperçus, prose fragments, referred to by most critics as "poems," though both terms (like two trees from a single acorn) from what Connell considered to be an experimental short story; an epic narrative history of the Plains Wars; and another of the Crusades, marketed by his publishers as a "novel," which Connell calls a "chronicle."

These are indeed odd vehicles. Quite a few of them remain in print. Others—too many—have gone the way of Douglas's tower. Among those most undeservedly allowed to vanish from the shelves are *A Long Desire* (1979) and *The White Lantern* (1980), two collections of historical essays. *The Aztec Treasure House* resurrects both volumes in their entirety, along with two previously uncollected pieces. Each of these twenty essays is a kind of scavenger hunt through space and time. The treasure that Connell acquires on these excursions is not material but biographical. "It is the singular person," he writes in what amounts to the book's thesis, "inexplicably drawn from familiar comforts toward a nebulous goal, lured often enough to death—it is he, or she, whose peregrinations can never be thoroughly understood, who is worth noticing." Connell roams across continents and centuries following the trails of those "compulsive tourists" and "prodigious adventurers" he deems worthy of notice: Vikings sailing beyond Ultima Thule for the icy shores of Vinland; Victorian ladies dragging their long skirts up the slopes of Kilimanjaro; explorers mushing their sled dogs across Antarctica; scientists endeavoring to map the universe or [illegible] the missing link.

Novelist, poet, essayist, historian—

Donovan Hohn's last article for Harper's *Magazine, "Fleurs du Mal," appeared in the February issue.*

comprises nearly

in the Renaissance,

cay ites several cubic tons of anthropological, scientific, and historical

so much more than the sum of the sources from which they are drawn is the very thing that makes the Bridges so much more interesting than other

Custer's Last Stand but a genuine literary masterpiece: Connell is a virtu-

In 1979, when Connell published *A Long Desire*, his first volume of essays, Edward Hoagland, writing in

tirely dismissed it as "one of those pleasure books of nonfiction that a good novelist will pause to write once in a while as a relief from the rigors of invention." Certainly it is true that these essays are among the most entertaining

them together do not equal the grandeur of Connell's finest work, *Son*

Camel (1962). But the rest of Hoagland's assessment has, in hindsight, proved to be off the mark. Con-

vention" has now lasted twenty-five

anything resembling a novel, conventionally defined. Instead, he has devoted himself to writing some of the

American literature.

the dramatic, Naipaul-like metamor-

Mrs. Bridge was published in 1959 some reviewers complained that the novel had "no real narrative" and consisted merely of a "ruthless selection" of "episodes." The novel has plenty of

What it lacks is an overarching dramatic plot. Connell tells

wife musically rather than dramatically, as a series of 117 subtitled variations—each one carefully shaped into an epiphany—on the theme of Mrs. Bridge's existential imprisonment.

Asked about the structure of *Mrs. Bridge* in an interview, Connell explained his intentions as follows: "[F]or most of us, our lives do not reach a dramatic climax in the way that books usually do. Most of us just go on day to day through major and minor trials and defeats. And finally time runs out." This desire, at once radical and old-fashioned, to represent human existence as accurately and as fully as possible informs all of Connell's narrative experiments, successful and otherwise.

Devoted to representation as he is, Connell's realism is not of the naive, cinematic, transparent-eyeball variety. As the parable of Douglas's tower would suggest, he is a highly reflexive, even self-referential (though never confessional) writer. Everything he writes is, on one level, a meditation on its own creation. In the 1940s, following the war, he studied to become a painter on the GI Bill, and his intensely visual writing abounds in portraits of artists and references to art.

The title story of his first collection, *The Anatomy Lesson* (1957), is both a fictionalized exegesis on the art of life drawing and a virtuosic performance of that art; both a portrait of one particular artist, Andrey Andraukov, instructor of drawing and painting, and a veiled declaration of Connell's own

"[T]he artist must not look at what he sees so much as what

Andraukov says. "[T]he artist must see around corners and through walls, even as he must see behind smiles, behind looks of pain."

Few critics have done as well as this

about Connell's portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Bridge, or of Custer, or of the many adventurers, alchemists, astronomers, and explorers profiled in *The Aztec Treasure House*. Everything Connell has written could be

stood as a radical kind of life dr

the product of his ongoing strug

see not only behind smiles and th

walls ("The Anatomy Lesson" beg

peeking through the locked d

Andraukov's studio and thereb

eventually understand, into his

but across continents and cent

Andraukov tells his students

> of how Rembrandt painted a
> woman looking out an open w
> and said to them that . . . she was
> th in one young woman, she was
> He told them that some afternoo
> would glance up by chance and s
> then they would know the mean
> Time—what it could destroy, w
> could not.

"The condition of life," Conne

written elsewhere, "is defeat." An

as his friend and most astute c

Gus Blaisdell, attests, he is nonetl

"on the side of life alone, fragile

beauties and terrible in its ago

When, early in *The Patriot* (19

sprawling, semi-autobiographic

dungsroman based on Connell's

rience as a naval aviator in World

II, he describes in minute detai

scene of a plane crash—regist

how the dead cadet and flight ins

tor "hung head down from their

ty belts," their hands resting or

cabin roof, and how, when the ca

corpse is removed from the pla

stream of coins won in a poker g

the night before spills from his p

ets onto the snow—the cumulativ

fect is not morbid or sensational

traumatic. Connell is a numism

of such ludicrous and luminous de

There is another scene in

Patriot that contains with

the germ of everything

would write for the next forty-

years. Home in Kansas City on

lough, aviation cadet Melvin Isa

accompanied by his roommate an

ther, visits the site of the battle of

ington, a battle in which his gr

grandfather had fought on the sid

the Confederates. A mansion on

property has been converted in

museum. For twenty-five cents api

the curator, a woman wearing "an

quilted housecoat" who smells of "v

gar and beer," gives her three visi

a guided tour, pointing out one by

…aces of the pist…a hole in the …made by a cannonball; the burn …s left on a banister by a hang… rope; the bloodstains on the var… …d boards where those captured …n soldiers who did not wish to be …, allowed instead the chance to … had landed atop a thicket of up… bayonets. After leaving the mu… …, Melvin and company visit the … of the house where Great-grand… r Isaacs once lived. "There was … where the silence of night and …," Connell writes, yet Melvin

…d the impression that at any moment … crystal chandelier and the great mar… …mantel might reappear and a fire …ze on the hearth and the rooms fill …th ghostly women and Confederate of… …ers, and the vanished spinet would …y a minuet while they danced and …oke of General Beauregard.

…he Patriot is Connell's *Portrait of …artist as a Young Man*, a novel about … its protagonist came to resemble its …ator. Like Melvin, Connell is op… …ed by the "senseless purpose, cours… …erfectly as a torpedo and as indif… …nt to the consequence" that usually …ivates human violence. He, too, is …nted by the past and has spent his …rying to rescue it from the "silence …ight and decay," a phrase one can …hear echoing four decades later in … epigraph of *Deus lo volt!* (2000). …nnell's chronicle of the Crusades: …e stream of Time, inexorable, con… …t," wrote the Byzantine princess …na Comnena, "removes from our …t all things that are born, and car… …into the night deeds of little ac… …nt, deeds worthy of notice. . . ." Worthy of notice" does not mean …thy of admiration. Connell aspires …e all, the most disturbing expres… …s of human nature as well as the …rtiful and marvelous. The "nebu… …goal" of his compulsive noticing, relentless peregrinations, is, in oth… …ords, similar to Proust's (for good …on the penultimate vignette of … *Bridge* is entitled "Remembrance Things Past"). The difference be… …en their respective projects is pri… …rily a matter of dimension: Proust's …avations are deeper; the site of …nnell's excavations, far broader. It …umanity's past, and not merely his …n, that Connell wishes to recover. His project, like Proust's, has re…

quired a new kind of storytelling. Just as he'd invented the mosaic form of *Mrs. Bridge* in order to portray more accurately an undramatic life, so has he sought to represent the past with radical fidelity. "I think of this as a book about the Crusades," he remarked of *Deus lo volt!*

> not an "historical novel" — a term that suggests imaginary experiences and unlikely conversations. . . . Every meeting, every conversation, every triumph or defeat, no matter how small, was recorded centuries ago.

Reviewing Susan Sontag's *In America* for *The New Republic*, critic James Wood recently expressed similar misgivings about the historical novel. Such was the pace of historical change in the twentieth century, Wood argued, that historical fiction has increasingly come to resemble "science-fiction facing backwards, with the same crudities of detail." The only hope today's historical novelist has of transcending the inherent "awkwardness of the genre," he wrote, is to become "self-conscious about his self-consciousness." Thus Sontag, in the opening chapter of *In America*, convenes her characters in a hotel dining room and wanders among them in the first person, "scattering seeds of prediction." Kevin Baker begins *Dreamland* with a self-conscious casting of the fictional spell: "'I know a story,' said Trick the Dwarf, and the rest of them leaned in close." Thomas Pynchon and his many offspring stage fantastic reenactments that unapologetically resemble "science-fiction facing backwards." William T. Vollmann intentionally archaizes. Robert Coover satirically anachronizes.

Connell's disavowal of "imaginary experiences and unlikely conversations" represents an altogether different solution to Wood's perceived dilemma. Whereas most postmodern historical novelists merrily confabulate the historical record in the service of fiction, Connell—along with Paul Metcalf, Guy Davenport, and a few other wrongly neglected writers who together form a kind of undeclared, underground school—has, in the service of historical detail, resisted projecting what Davenport calls "an illusory, fictional world." "[T]he old masks and artifices of conventional fiction . . . were worn out,"

Metcalf [illegible] of our attention [illegible] the richest possible lode, begging to be mined." Like Connell, both Davenport and Metcalf [illegible] works not easily classified at first as either fiction or nonfiction, collage constructed out of [illegible] out of, in Davenport's phrase, "a handful of doubtful certainties." In a sense, they have done for prose what Pound's *Cantos* and William Carlos Williams's *Paterson* did for poetry. Their work fulfills the prophecy, made by the poet Charles Olson in 1951, that one of the future directions the novel would take was toward the documentary. Rather than make things up, Olson wrote, the documentary novelist "juxtaposes, correlates, and causes to interact."

Shortly after finishing *Mrs. Bridge* and *The Patriot*, Connell embarked upon his first attempt at turning history into art. The result, an imaginary travelogue entitled *Notes from a Bottle Found on the Beach at Carmel* published in 1962, is his most ambitious experiment in collage. A composite of the great "compulsive tourists" of history (part Marco Polo, part Paracelsus, part Columbus), Connell's mythic note-taker sails across the oceans of Time, accumulating a jumble of textual fragments as chaotic and as intricately patterned as the shards of a kaleidoscope (the analogy is Connell's). "I employ the procedure of Saint Gregory," he explains, "which allows/for the sake of the moral a juxtaposition of all things,/no matter how incompatible or contrary." He quotes from documents (the diary of an ill-fated Viking, the Lord's Prayer in Latin, the cost-benefit analysis of an atomic bomb). He makes apothegmatic pronouncements and poses gnostic questions.

References to apocalyptic events (the bombing of Japan, the bubonic plague, the Inquisition) recur as a leitmotiv, and a basso continuo of postnuclear foreboding runs throughout the poem, as if the bottle containing these notes had been jettisoned from Western civilization's [illegible] Connell's wandering note-taker juxtaposes all things "for the sake of the moral," and, although [illegible] polemical, Connell is at heart a deeply

[illegible] And whereas the key signature of the poems is relentlessly dark, [illegible] is for the most light-hearted. Humor is perhaps the least remarked aspect of his gift.

In "Syllables Here and There," a profile of those linguists and antiquarians [illegible] devoted their lives to "the [illegible] pronouncements" Connell tells of a scholar named George Smith, who, upon deciphering some previously inscrutable scrap of cuneiform, strode back and forth in front of his colleagues, and then, on an upper floor of the British Museum, began taking off his clothes. "[A]fter having removed his laboratory smock, his necktie, his shirt, and possibly his trousers, did he—as we say—come to his senses?" Connell wonders.

> [illegible] colleagues pretend to find [illegible] in his behavior? Did they [illegible] regarding their baked [illegible] [illegible] some tireless staff member [illegible]?
>
> "I've suggested [illegible] document you carrying things a bit far?"
>
> We don't know because whoever [illegible] from those days didn't [illegible] important. It was, though [illegible] biographers ought to [illegible] and [illegible]

A much abridged catalogue of Connell's details would include the fact that Jean-François Champollion, the [illegible] deciphered Egyptian hieroglyphics, wrote, at the age of twelve, a scholarly paper entitled "A History of Dogs"; that in 1857, Lt. Edward Fitzgerald Beale of the U.S. Department of Indian Affairs reached Inscription Rock in western New Mexico riding at the head of a camel train and that "this remarkable column included a Syrian camel driver known as [illegible] and all with the Levantine greeting, 'Hadj Ali!'"; that shortly after leading a failed search for El Dorado on which some 160 soldiers had died and the survivors had been obliged to cook their horses, Hernán Quesada, "while playing cards on a boat on the Río Magdalena during a thunderstorm . . . got in the way of a lightning bolt"; that when an Etruscan sarcophagus was opened "'the body of a young warrior'" that [illegible] lain inviolate for centuries sud[illegible] dissolved into dust. . . . In the air, [illegible] ever, and around the torches, a [illegible] en powder seemed to be hoverin[illegible]

The Aztec Treasure House of th[illegible] lection's title refers to an adve[illegible] novel of the same name. In his [illegible] hood, this had been Connell's fav[illegible] book, and after happening across a[illegible] of it in a San Francisco flea marke[illegible] begins to suspect that this absur[illegible] mance, about a young America[illegible] chaeologist referred to as "Don To[illegible] who luckily inherits a hieroglyphic [illegible] sure map from a mortally wou[illegible] cacique, may very well be the sour[illegible] his obsessive and somewhat mys[illegible] ous fascination with, in particular[illegible] ancient Mexican artifacts he pas[illegible] ately collects. He once considered[illegible] *Aztec Treasure House* to be "the [illegible] book in the world"; now he can't s[illegible] ach more than a few paragraphs. [illegible] then, "skipping across half-rememb[illegible] pages," he comes to the following l[illegible] "Hello, Professor! Young called o[illegible] he caught sight of me, have you g[illegible] up antiquities . . . ?" "No. No indeed [illegible] Young!" Connell replies, shou[illegible] "across the years, answering not [illegible] Don Tomas but for myself, surrour[illegible] as I am by cracked old Mexican [illegible] and mutilated statuettes."

Again and again in these ess[illegible] Connell revisits some fable or adv[illegible] ture story, some "'magic carpet'" t[illegible] once upon a time had "'annihil[illegible] time and space, and gilded all with [illegible] aura of the golden age of childhoo[illegible] only to find that the carpet has [illegible] much of its magic: the events are [illegible] imaginary, the dialogue too unlik[illegible] the rendering of historical detail [illegible] crude. The artifacts Connell excav[illegible] from beneath the many strata of s[illegible] mentary legend are invariably m[illegible] wondrous than the legends themsel[illegible] Which is to say that Don Tomas's [illegible] eroglyphic map pointed the way [illegible] hidden treasure after all: not to im[illegible] mary Aztec gold but to a museu[illegible] worth of singular individuals. "Th[illegible] can be no doubt that this was a p[illegible] son," Connell writes of one parti[illegible] larly beautiful Mexican statuette,

> not a symbol of humanity but a rep[illegible] sentative of it who lived in the area [illegible] that time, who sat cross-legged in t[illegible] shade of a tree or in some thatched-r[illegible]

Connell has revised this passage for The [illegible]

...hile one of his neighbors mum... ...d the dark clay with a little stick, ...ed to stare, and tried again and then ...n in order to get the mouth just ..., and the thrust of the nose, and ...ontour of the cheek, all for the ... of true expression.

...nell's purpose in these essays is ...le and as ambitious as that "'I ... of the human body,'" Andraukov ...'and of the human soul.'" Even ...ne's writing about the history of ...my, what attracts Connell more ... the secrets of the universe are ...ures who uncovered them, figures ...s Johannes Kepler, "a seven... century Job," whose "baroque ...—multiplying satellites, heaven... ...sic and so forth—may have ... from his personal afflictions."

...great advantage the historical ...ist has always had over the his... ...is omniscience. Gibbon's em... ...cannot soliloquize; Shakespeare's ...While biographers of Christ strug... ...vain to resurrect their subject ...n historical record riddled with ...ue and occluded by hearsay, the ...sian novelist Mikhail Bulgakov ...s us what the weather was like on ...morning of the Crucifixion. Even ... the record is comparatively in... ...t the novelist's advantage pertains ...scholar of the Napoleonic Wars ...ompete with *War and Peace* ...nd yet, for all his fidelity to fact, ...nell's ambitions are artistic, not ...arly. By intertwining primary and ...ndary sources with meticulous de... ...ition, he creates the illusion of ...listic omniscience. He can read ...mind of a Neanderthal. He can ...s how the Antarctic explorer Sir ...glas Mawson felt after eating the ... of a husky named Ginger for ... last one morning in 1913. In *Star ...Morning Star*, an epic work of ...iction that perhaps more than any ...r piece of American literature *can* ...pete with *War and Peace* (doing ...he Plains Wars what Tolstoy's ...d did for the Napoleonic ones), ...nell assembles a *Guernica*-like ...d of the Battle of the Little ...orn composed from thousands of ...ments and refracted through hun... ...s of different, often conflicting, ...nts of view. He moves freely ...ugh time as well as space, flash... ...backward and forward but always

circling and circling, like the war-hol... lering Sioux on their ponies, around the mystery of what happened on that Montana hillside where Custer made his stand, pausing to draw portraits of dozens of figures centrally or tangentially involved in the battle, from General Custer and Sitting Bull all the way down to Captain Myles Keogh's intrepid steed, Comanche, one of the only horses to survive the slaughter of Custer's cavalry. After his attendant died, Comanche

> grew increasingly morose. No longer did he root through garbage pails, which

...

What the nineteenth-century Russian historian ... said of Tolstoy thus applies equally well to Connell:

> In [his] analysis ... there are no limits either in man's temperament, his age, or his sex, nor even in a zoological species, for at times he shows us what the bull felt, what the dog thought, what the horse was imagining. ■



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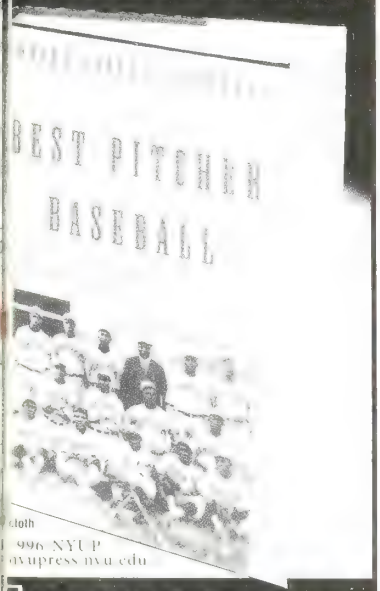
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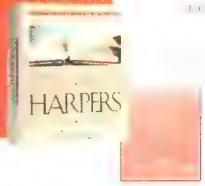


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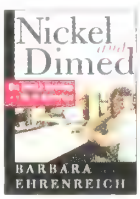
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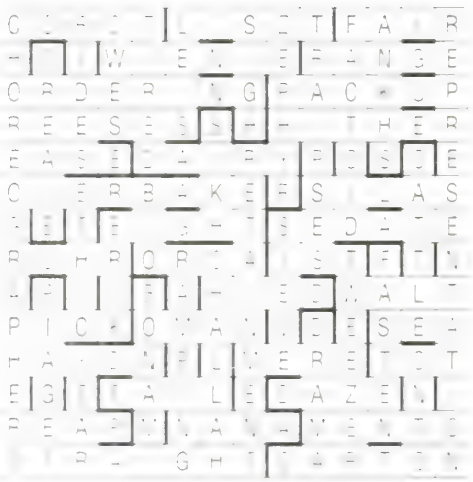
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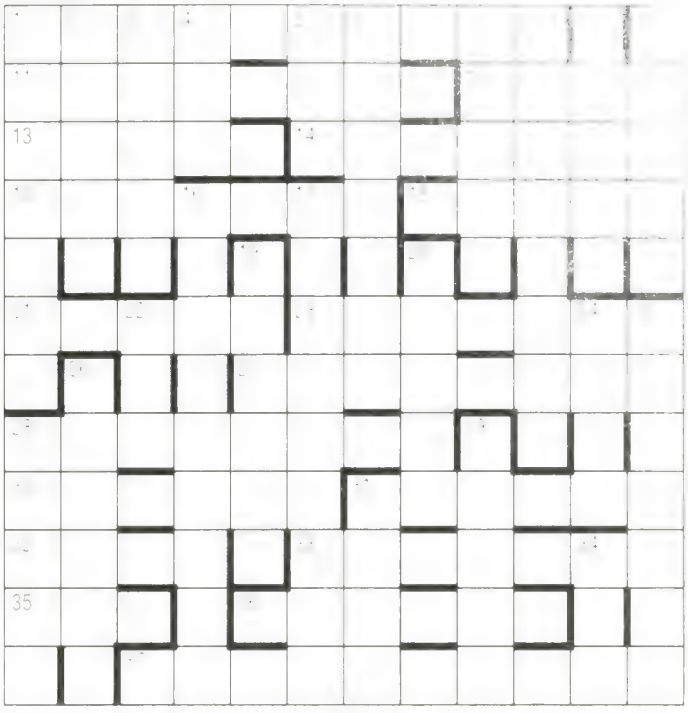


ground movement for Israeli
pendence when they them
were teenagers.

This comparison is grossly
leading and smacks of irrespo
journalism. The Jewish yout
the independence movement
Israel became a state were
pushed into situations of physic
olence, confronting soldiers (B
at the time), but were used as
sengers and in other nonconfr
tional roles. The bizarre aspe
the PLO intifada is that Arab
tans, especially children, are
cally endangered so that the
will become angry at the Israe
thorities when, in self-defense,
respond to the provocation.

Tenafly, N.J.

PUZZLE



Send a Letter

by Richard E. Maltby Jr.

B

Word lengths refer to the diagram entry. Clue answers will be given in the next issue.

Clue answers include six proper names. Words actually entered include five proper names (a woman's name, a ballplayer, a literary title, and two geographical terms). [illegible] As always, [illegible] the next issue. [illegible]

1 [illegible]
11. European bread for wild parties (8)
12. Rubbish, as left from wild parties (4)
14 [illegible]
24 [illegible]
25 [illegible]
28 [illegible]
21. Electronic follower of Caesar's team (5)
23. Soothing the French man on the head (7)
27. Losers get groove back on ABC, for example? (8)
28. Touching lattice construction (8)
30 [illegible]
31. Copyright Frost in plagiarism, i.e. (6)
32. Cruise, perhaps, and throw back a clever remark (4)
33. Passes on getting into *Bambi*, i.e., it's most likely to [illegible] today (7)
35 [illegible]
36 [illegible]
37. Stale dialogue from *The Very Last Moments* (13)

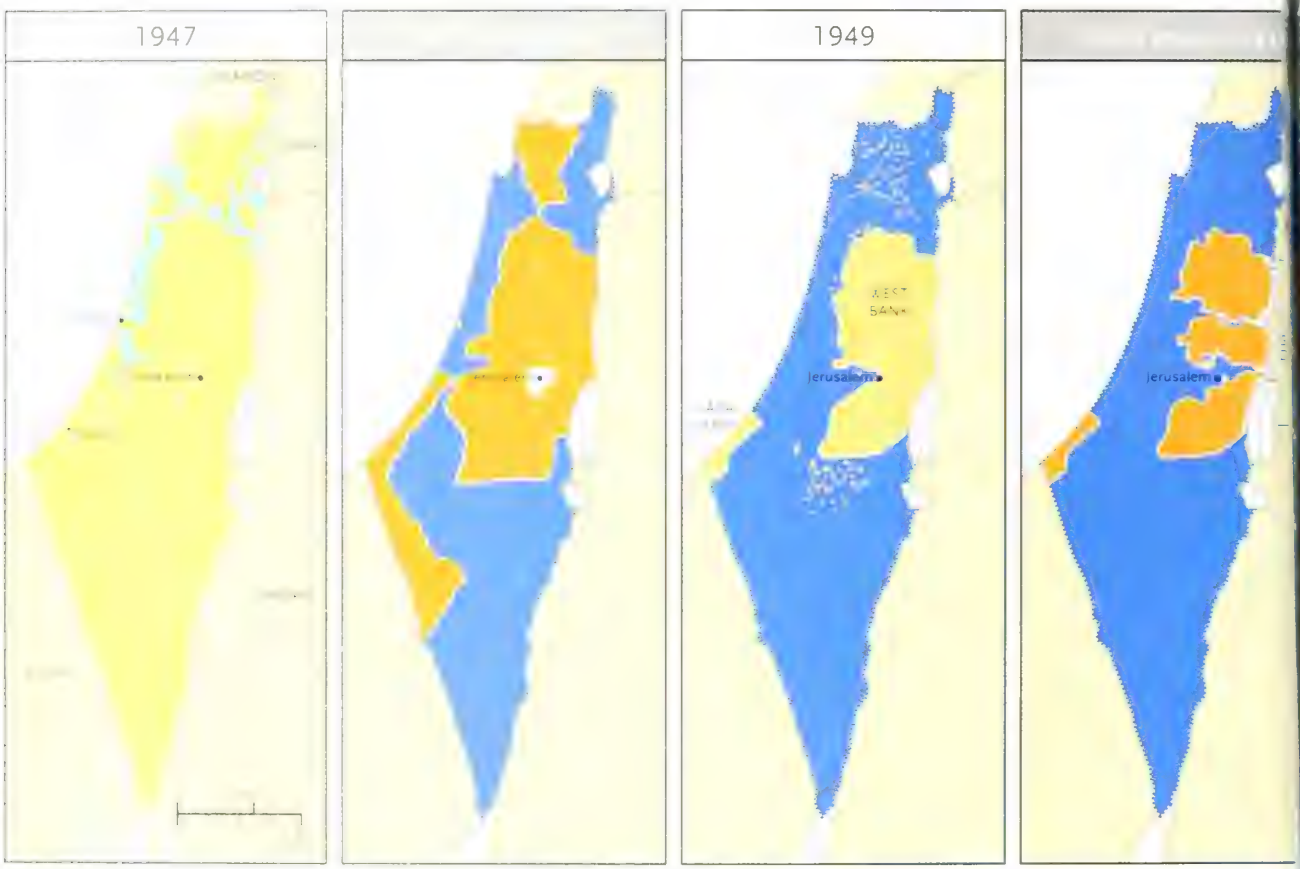
1 [illegible]
2 [illegible]
6 Temporary owner contributes to making children [illegible]
9 [illegible]
10 [illegible]
17 Declined shady, uh, dealings (9)
18 [illegible]
19 [illegible]
20 [illegible]
26 They can vex us in tavern brawls [illegible]
29 [illegible]
34 [illegible]

Contest Rules [illegible]

LOSING GROUND

[illegible] its history. The Jews of the Torah had largely dispersed by the time of the Arab conquest in the se[illegible] [illegible] Herzl, [illegible] 1922 [illegible] Zionist mi[illegible] [illegible] the Jewish population seventeenfold by 1947. That year, seeking a geographically unified homeland, the Arabs rej[illegible] [illegible] and launched a war that left the newly created Israel with most of the land. By 1949 more than 700,000 Ara[illegible] [illegible] in most cases, their holdings declared "absentee property" and confiscated by Israel, which refused to readmit them [illegible] the West Bank and Gaza Strip—eluded Israeli control until they came under occupation during the 1967 Arab-[illegible] Arab Leaguer U.N. peace terms calling for Israeli withdrawal from the territories in exchange for Arab recognition of Israel's right to [illegible] Israel built 27,322 Jewish settlement units there over the next two decades, a step the U.N. condemned as a breach of the Geneva [illegible] [illegible] In 1988 the P.L.O. publicly endorsed the U.N. peace terms and called for an independent Arab state; five years later, und[illegible] [illegible] Accords, both sides officially agreed to talks. During the next seven years, as Israel carried out negotiated withdrawals from p[illegible] the territories, it continued building settlements there, along with a network of connecting roads. In 2000, Israel made its first de[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Israeli territory, [illegible] and the [illegible] [illegible] plan the P.L.O. rejected. Two months later, a new Palestinian intifada began.

—*Seth Ack[illegible]*

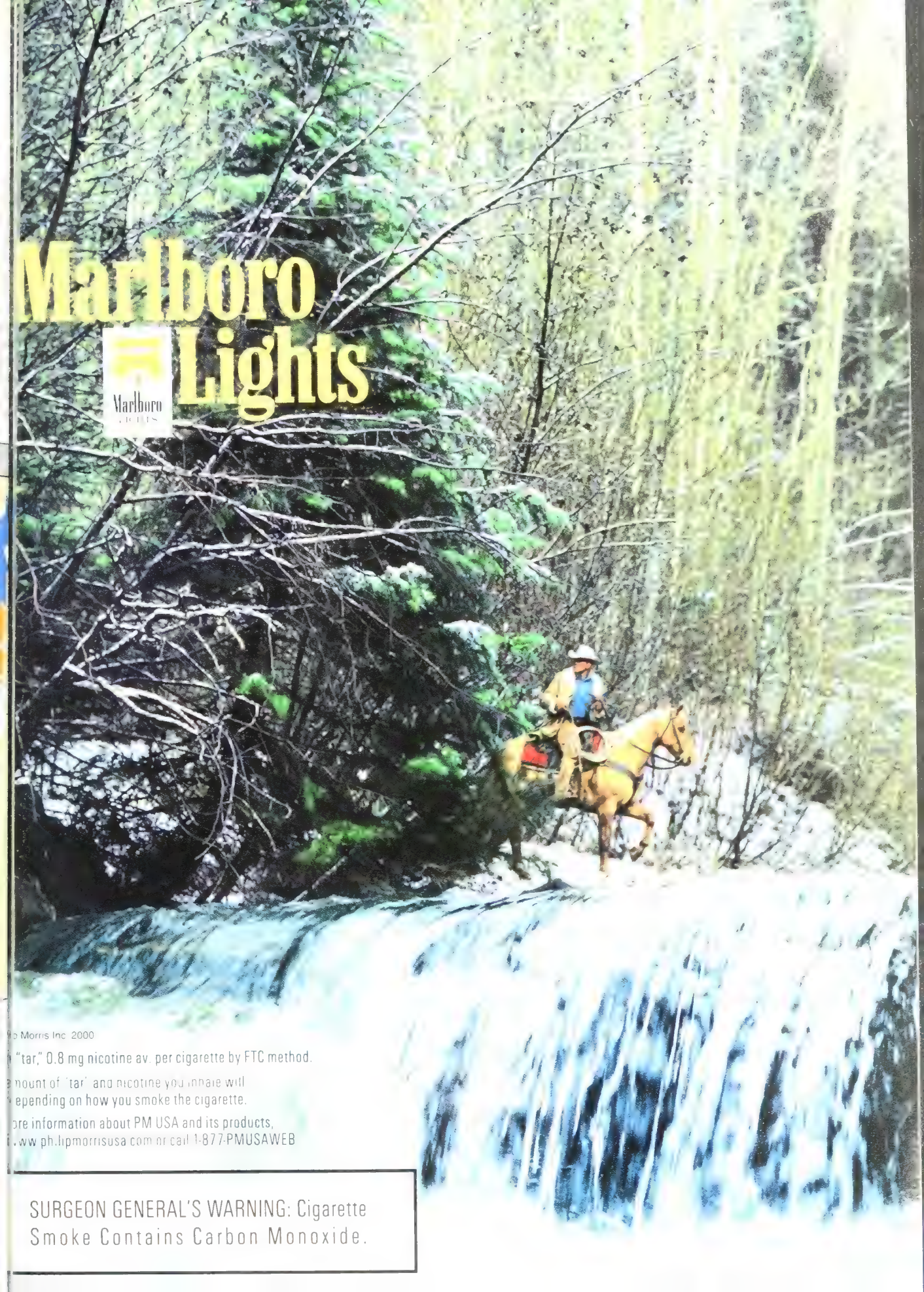


[illegible] of the land for a Jewish state and [illegible]

By war's end, 418 Arab towns have been depopulated, and Israel controls 78 percent of the land (where some Arab towns remain), with the West Bank left to Jordan to prevent a Palestinian state there, and Egypt in control of the Gaza Strip

Israel's plan for a Palestinian state includes isolated Arab pockets of Jerusalem and a network of Jewish settlement roads (not shown) dividing th[illegible] West Bank into 29 pieces, its eastern edge under Israeli con[illegible] without formal annexation.

			Israeli



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